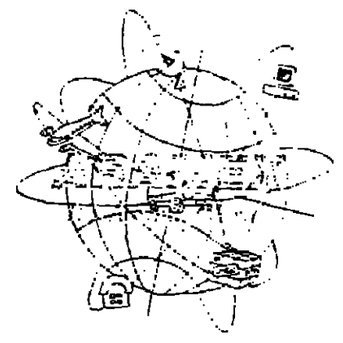
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Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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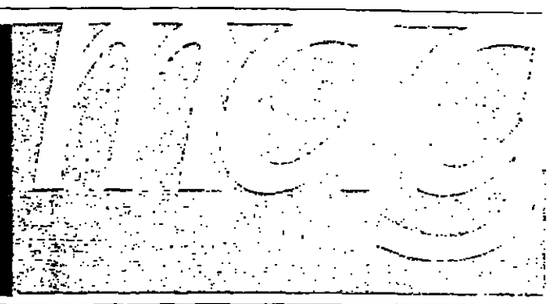
In search of Dana
Page 2



Mandela of the people
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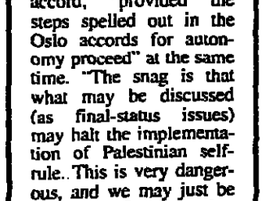
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Majali says US promised to stand by Jordan

By Nora Boustany
WASHINGTON—Following talks last week between His Majesty King Hussein and US officials on dangers haunting the Middle East, "nothing is ready, they are feeling their way towards an initiative, but they are taking it very seriously," said new Jordanian Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh. The former ambassador to Washington was sworn in last Monday at King Hussein's River Road residence here. The King told Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and President Clinton that, given the climate of obstruction *in the region, "there is* nothing that can be called pressure anymore," on either the Israeli or the Palestinian side. He urged his hosts to launch an "even-handed" venture to defuse the crisis, Tarawneh said.

In an interview, Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali said Jordan has "no problem with beginning final-status talks" on pending issues in the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord, "provided the steps spelled out in the Oslo accords for autonomy proceed" at the same time. "The snag is that what may be discussed (as final-status issues) may halt the implementation of Palestinian self-rule. This is very dangerous, and we may just be heading for another dilemma," he cautioned. Majali said Washington promised to assist Jordan economically since its *expected* "peace dividend" never materialized. "The Americans have agreed to stand by Jordan in alleviating its economic problems," Majali said. Majali basked in his sunny hotel room at the Four Seasons Thursday, savoring the scent of 200 red and yellow roses, a welcome gesture from the *Saudi ambassador*, Prince Bandar bin Sultan. King Hussein and Majali dined at Bandar's house last Tuesday night, further proof that Saudi-*Jordanian* ties are warm again following a six-year chill over the Gulf War. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Weather Outlook

● *The weather will be cloudy to partly cloudy during the coming three days with possible rain showers and sub zero temperatures at night in the mountainous areas. Temperatures will rise by mid week, but they will remain below average.*

Clinton abandons efforts to reverse Netanyahu's policies

Political process dissipates after Hebron carnage

By Barton Gellman
HEBRON—Another round of ferocious clashes broke out in the divided West Bank city of Hebron on Wednesday, one day after similar clashes left three Palestinians dead and hundreds injured adding to growing evidence that a violent uprising has resumed alongside the deadlocked Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. At least 40 Palestinians were injured in Wednesday's clashes.

As political contacts near collapse and daily confrontations end their third week, a hardening of public opinion on both sides has helped mark what increasingly looks like a turning point in the three years of what the Israelis consider an experiment in negotiated peace.

For the first time since the two sides made peace in September 1993, mainstream Palestinian leaders are organizing confrontations with Israeli troops.

Veteran members of Arafat's Fatah faction in the Palestine Liberation Organization—activists such as Marwan Barghouti and Ahmed Adik, who reached prominence in the 1987-93 Intifada, the uprising against Israeli military occupation, and later became influential supporters of negotiated peace—have come full circle. Now they openly plan a long-term campaign of what they call resistance to the dictates of the Jewish state.



A Palestinian policeman tries to intervene to stop Israeli soldiers from firing at Palestinian stone-throwers in Hebron, Tuesday

President Clinton said in Washington that there is a "fairly decent chance" that the United States can still help restart the peace talks. But he gave no indication how that might happen, and both sides continued to dig in on the central issues of land and security that divide them.

Officials said Clinton has abandoned the effort to reverse Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's decision to build a disputed Jewish neighborhood in Arab East Jerusalem.

Netanyahu twice has rebuffed direct presidential appeals against breaking ground on the project. Clinton is looking instead for ways to compensate Palestinians with progress on the opening of an airport in the Gaza Strip, the seat of Arafat's Palestinian Authority; a seaport there; and free passage between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Palestinian officials said they will send a high-level delegation to Washington Thursday, headed by negotiator Mahmoud Abbas, known as Abu Mazen.

But a dissenting US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, expressed doubts that the administration is prepared to pay the political price of saving the talks.

"The Israelis are every day sending signals that the land the Palestinians have now is all they are going to get, and the Palestinians are never going to accept that," he said. "That's what it comes down to. All the rest is fluff."

The clashes Tuesday began when a Jewish seminary student, using an Uzi submachine gun provided by the army for his defense, shot Assam Rashid Arafeh, 24, to death. The shooting occurred in an alley near the Ibrahimi Mosque. The victim of the shooting died of a single gunshot to the chest at close range, according to the emergency room surgeon who received the body at Hebron's Alia Hospital.

The settler and his armed companion told police that Palestinians had doused them first with tear gas or some caustic chemical. But Palestinians who said they were witnesses denied the two students were attacked. On Wednesday an Israeli court accepted the settlers' claim of self defence and released them.

After the shooting, an enraged crowd of Palestinians set upon the settlers, "throwing chairs, stones, everything that wasn't nailed down," according to military policeman Uri Shabtai. Israeli troops extricated the

Continued on page 2

Election year starts with political bickering

By Hamdan Al Hajj
Special to The Star
EMOTIONS ARE high already ahead of elections for the *13th parliament, to be held this autumn. The elections issue* continues to be the main focus of attention at the Ministry of Interior. Parliamentarians are anxiously waiting to see the *kind of arrangements that are currently being made by the* ministry in preparations for the coming elections.

Despite the fact that the Lower House is no longer in session *deputies are quietly thinking of their next move.* Should they call for an extraordinary session or should they let sleeping dogs lie, so to speak.

Although not in session, constitutionally the Lower House continues to function until the new Lower House is elected on 8 November. Thus, parliamentary business, *minus the weekly parliamentary debates continues as usual.*

However for some deputies, parliamentary debate is seen as vital, something which the government prefers not to

Continued on page 2

US influence in Mideast on verge of collapse

Gingrich: Clinton should not be even-handed!

WASHINGTON—With the US position as primary Middle East power broker possibly in jeopardy for the first time in more than two decades, President Clinton said Tuesday it is *up to Israel and the Palestinians "to decide* whether they're willing to let the peace process go forward."

Speaking in a news conference a day after a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that administration aides described as often difficult, Clinton offered only the most perfunctory expression of hope that the Middle East stalemate will end any time soon.

"We are prepared to do whatever we can," Clinton said, without hinting what that might be. Then he urged reporters not to conclude "that I think there's no chance that we'll get it going again."

"In the end," he added, "it still depends on what it always has depended on. And that is the parties taking responsibility to take the risks for peace."

In the past, Israel and its Arab adversaries seldom have taken those risks without a combination of encouragement and pressure from *Washington. In his meeting with Clinton on* Monday and at a subsequent news conference, Netanyahu asserted that his government will *make no additional concessions, because it* already has done all it can be expected to do. And Palestinian officials, expressing disillusionment with US mediation, have been turning to Europe for support.

Palestinian representatives adopted a wait-and-see attitude after Netanyahu's Monday session. Hasan Abdel-Rahman, the Palestine Liberation Organization's representative in Washington, and Hanan Ashrawi, a member of Arafat's cabinet, met at the State Department on Tuesday with Dennis Ross, the administration's Middle East trouble-shooter. The meeting was in advance of talks expected later this week between US officials and a senior Palestinian delegation.

After the meeting, Ashrawi said Arafat will consider a summit meeting with Netanyahu if such a meeting is needed. At the same time, she said of the Israelis: "One side cannot

Continued on page 2

Anti-peace schoolboys:

They love MacDonald's, hard rock and hate Israel

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer
TWO YOUNG Jordanians are expected to be released by police today, Thursday, after being held for six days on suspicion of planning to carry out "subversive activities" against the peace process and the Israeli embassy in Amman, sources said. Seven other school boys were released earlier this week after their families had posted bail of JD 5000 each.

The nine 11-grade schoolboys, about 16 and 17 years of age, were arrested by the police last Wednesday for allegedly planning an attack against the Israeli embassy in Amman, and on suspicions of forming an illegal organization and distributing pamphlets against the peace process.

The school boys, all members of Jordanian families living in affluent west Amman, were said to have been influenced by scenes of Palestinian uprising against the Israeli army in the West Bank, family members told *The Star*. "They are kids who wanted to express themselves," one parent said. Families stressed that their sons had never been involved in politics. One surprised parent said the boys liked MacDonald's and rock music.

"My son loves to have a good time and eat at MacDonald's. Together with the other mothers we were shocked by the arrest of our sons," said Mrs Said Al Kayed, mother of Abdel Rhman Al Kayed, 16, one of the released boys.

"They are children and should not be taken seriously. And after all, we are a democratic country, people have the right to express themselves," she said.

"My son is a rock music freak" said Mrs Salwa Mesha'l, mother of Ala', 16. "He spends most of his time at home or at school. He joins his friends only on Wednesdays."

Police has been on the look out for the young boys for the past three weeks, since unknown perpetrators burnt tyres close to the Israeli embassy in Amman. Rushing to get away, three of the boys left their school bags behind. It was this piece of evidence that led the police to their whereabouts.

Three boys were consequently arrested and they, in

Continued on page 2

Einstein's house a source of controversy

By William Drozdiak
CAPUTH, Germany—When Albert Einstein wanted to fathom the deepest mysteries of the universe, he liked to retreat to a wooden house in this fishing village near Berlin that he described as "my paradise." Here, in the years before the Nazis came to power, he found the tranquillity he craved to produce some of his most inspired work.

After fleeing Nazi Germany for a new life in America, Einstein carried with him an abiding nostalgia for the Bauhaus home into which he had poured his entire savings. He would often reminisce about long walks in the aromatic pine forest behind his house with fellow scientists Max Planck, Fritz Haber and Otto Hahn, and recall how their conversations broke new ground in 20th-century science.

But in the past few years, Einstein's cherished abode has been stripped of its placid character. Instead, it has emerged as the prime source of controversy in one of the most bitterly disputed property claim cases since the *reunification of* Germany.

When East Germany was folded into the West, it provided the first opportunity for thousands of Jewish families to recover property in the former communist sector that was lost or abandoned by parents or *grandparents during the 1930s.* But ownership of Einstein's house has evolved into such a complicated custody battle that the case might befuddle even the father of the theory of relativity.

In one corner stands the village of Caputh, which sees the house as a prized attraction that will lure free-spending tourists. The local authorities base their claim on the Nazi law of 1935 that transferred ownership of the house to the state and "compensated" the Einstein family with 5,000 marks—less than one-tenth of the property's true value at the time.

The award-winning physicist had left Germany one month before Adolf Hitler rose to power, and he never returned. From his exile at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, N.J., Einstein gave permission for his house to be used as a Jewish orphanage.

The children stayed there until November 1938, when the local headmaster and his pupils chased them out and ransacked the place during the infamous Kristallnacht purge of Jews. The orphans were relocated to Berlin, but many of them later perished at Auschwitz. Meantime, the house was employed for a variety of other purposes, first as a Nazi girl scout headquarters and later as a rest home for *German air force veterans.*

Caputh's attempt to seize ownership of a house that its *inhabitants had profaned in* order to transform it into a tourist shrine dedicated to the scientist they drove away has provoked a furious legal challenge from other claimants, who say they are disgusted by the village's warped sense of history.

"These people simply have no sense of shame. How can they now pretend to treat Einstein as a favorite son after they forced him to leave the *one place that he really loved?"* said Gary Smith, an American



scholar who heads the Einstein Forum, an academic research *center in nearby Potsdam.*

For the past four years, Smith has been struggling to unite the 11 heirs of Einstein's stepdaughter Margot—a dis-

Continued on page 2

World Report

Trouble continues to brew between clearance agents and Lloyds at Aqaba

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer
CLEARANCE AGENTS and transport companies continue to be outraged by the existence of the "Lloyds Register Aqaba Cargo Verification Team," at the Aqaba port.

Members of the Forwarders Association Owners Syndicate are angry. They say that the Lloyds measures far exceed their main task which is limited to monitoring, recording, and reporting the movement of cargo destined to Iraq via the Aqaba port.

Over the last two months the situation has worsened between the shippers and the Lloyds Register Team.

"This team has even started interfering in cargo that is destined to Jordanian companies and factories," president of the syndicate Salim Jadoun told *The Star*.

Jadoun added that Lloyds inspectors are claiming that such measures are aimed at making sure that these cargos are not later re-exported to Iraq.

Mr Martin Cronin of the British Embassy in Amman confirmed that the Lloyds team is operating within what have been agreed upon between Lloyds Register and the Jordanian government and approved by the United Nations. Mr Cronin added that the Jordanian government and the Port Authorities told the team that it *is "quiet content with its* procedures."

Lloyds was first allowed to inspect cargo sent to Iraq via Aqaba when the UN imposed economic sanctions on that country after the last Gulf war when it invaded Kuwait in 1990.

"We, as a syndicate protested the existence of Lloyds from the start, but such an issue was imposed on us," Mr Jadoun said. However, "we

Continued on page 3

The mysteries of Dhana

In search of the nature reserve

By Olivier Bras
Special to The Star

DHANA—On your right is the tail-end of the Dead sea. On your left, there are the mountains with clumps of green trees. And just in front of you, there is a gorge laying in the desert steppes of Wadi Araba.

To enjoy this unique landscape, you don't need a plane or a hot air balloon. You can do it from the entrance to the campsite of Wadi Dhana.

To get there however, you will have to drive about 10 kilometers after Tafileh, on the Kings Highway. On your right, a small roadsign directs you to the campsite, five kilometers before the village of Dhana. Don't be surprised to see on the small road going down to the site, huge trucks coming from the cement factory that is nearby.

It may seem strange to see such monsters near a natural reserve, but you'll soon forget them once you are in the camp.

This campsite, created by the Royal Society of Conservation of Nature (RSCN), has now existed for the last few years. It has about 10 tents, and up to six people can sleep in any one tent.

This campsite can provide you with all the modern comforts, including toilets, showers and somewhere to cook.

But you're not here for the traditional comforts. You're here to discover the mysteries of one of the most beautiful natural reserves in Jordan. This place conceals unique treasures: animals, plants, trees, stones. Even the sky will appear different. Without city lights, the sky offers you an incredible spectacle. We were fortunate enough to see the Hale-Bopp comet that will next appear two centuries from now. The view was majestic.

It's of course not easy to discover all the richness of the reserve. For those who are not too familiar with natural life, it's better to rely on one of the guides working in the campsite.

If you have the chance to spend a few hours with Salem, you will have a new vision of Jordan. This man, who traveled around the world, decided one day to make Wadi Dhana his permanent stay. Why, you ask? "Because it's the place where I feel best," he will answer you with his sparkling eyes.

He knows every single herb in this reserve, can recognize every bird by his singing, and will tell you the old tales and legends of the region.

With a cup of tea in one hand, you will travel in his world, before dreaming in your tent of hyenas, owls and the ibex.

The following day, when the sun begins to heat up your tent, you just have one desire: to go in search of all these treasures on one of the four trails starting from the campsite. One will lead you to the old Dhana village, partially restored few years ago by architect Ammar Khammash.

It will take you about three hours to cover the 10 kilometers between the camp and the village that is settled deep in the mountain. Because of the unity of color between the rocks and the houses, the village is hardly distinguishable from its natural habitat.



The beauty of Dhana dominates the landscape

The footpath along the hillside offers a permanent panorama on Wadi Dhana and Wadi Araba. Just enjoy the silence of this place and the beauty of the rocks.

In the last kilometer, you will find again traces of human life, like small irrigation canals. At this time of the year, Wadi Dhana looks like a huge garden, with water springs everywhere. The trees are blooming and people working in pastures.

After this walk, you can have a rest in Dhana. Visitors can buy something to eat or drink, and discover the handicrafts of this village.

This trail is just one of the four proposed. This natural reserve has much more to offer for those who have a few more days to spend. It's one of the best places in Jordan to enjoy nature. And it gives a totally different image of Jordan. For more more information or to book a tent, call the RSCN at the 837 931. ■

Einstein's house a source of controversy

Continued from page 1

parate group that includes family descendants and organizations ranging from Jerusalem's Hebrew University to the New Jersey chapter of an anti-vivisection league.

Smith said Einstein always loathed the idea that his house might become a tourist attraction and often pleaded for it to be preserved as a place of contemplation and research for scholars.

That wish was honored by East Germany's communist government, which designated the place a historical landmark and renovated the house in the 1979 centenary of Einstein's birth. During the 40-year existence of the German Democratic Republic, access to the house was restricted by that government's Academy of Sciences. It was reserved primarily as a guest house for prominent physicists.

After Germany was unified in 1990, the village won the first big legal battle by wresting control of Einstein's property from the state of Brandenburg. But since then, Smith has managed to win partial custody of the place for his research center, which, with the consent of the heirs, wants to uphold Einstein's wish of creating a permanent retreat for scholars.

"We want this place to be saved as our special icon," Smith said. "It should become a fount of inspiration for the kind of excellence in the sciences and humanities that Einstein represented."

The Einstein Forum is now allowed to use the spacious pine dwelling during the week for seminars in return for paying maintenance costs. But on weekends, hundreds of visitors are allowed to traipse through Einstein's sanctuary and Smith fears the house may soon fall apart from the heavy wear and tear inflicted by tourists.

The timber frame is already rotting away and large-scale repairs cannot be carried out until the courts decide once and for all who is the rightful owner. Architects also deplore the house's neglected state because it is considered a design showcase of the Bauhaus master Konrad Wachsmann, who installed all kinds of ingenious touches for his close friend Einstein. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

US influence in Mideast on verge

Continued from page 1

behave like an occupier and like a dictator."

Meanwhile, France asserted a new role for itself and the European Union in Middle East peacemaking, explaining that the Palestinians had appealed to the Europeans to get involved.

In an interview with a French newspaper, Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said: "The Mideast peace process is in an extremely serious and probably unprecedented state of crisis. In this situation of quasi-rupture, we have noted for the first time a pressing appeal by the Palestinians for Europe to do its part. Europe must play an active role by exerting the necessary pressure for the resumption of the peace process."

If France and its European allies were to become more deeply involved in the peace process, the result could become a competition of big powers, with the United States backing Israel and the Europeans supporting the Palestinians. Such a scenario would recall the stalemate of the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the United States and the Soviet Union competed in the Middle East, with Washington backing Israel and Moscow supporting the Arabs.

The 1976 Camp David conference, which led to peace between Israel and Eygpt, broke that mold and initiated Washington's virtually unchallenged position as Middle East mediator.

"Europe has been excluded from the peace process during the past few years," De Charette said in the newspaper interview. "Europe must make concrete proposals, present a global package addressed to both the Israelis and the Palestinians."

Meanwhile, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, charged President Clinton with threatening Israel's security by giving even-handed treatment to different behavior by Israelis and Palestinians.

"When the Clinton-Gore administration treats with moral equivalence Palestinian violence and Israeli housing, they undermine Israel's security," Gingrich, in a sharply worded speech, told an enthusiastically supportive meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, the influential pro-Israel lobbying group.

The speaker's remarks, which echo those by Netanyahu, came a day after talks between Clinton and Netanyahu, long a favorite of conservative Republicans, failed to achieve progress in the Middle East peace process. That effort has faltered in a wave of violence since Israel began construction of a settlement in Arab East Jerusalem last month.

Gingrich said administration officials, who have criticized the housing project, should not seek concessions from Israel until Yasser Arafat and his Palestinian authority fulfill their obligations under the Oslo peace accords, notably renouncing their call for destruction of Israel.

"There should be no question of any pressure on the Israeli government to make any concessions until Arafat has met the demands of 3 1/2 years ago in Oslo and the burden should be placed by the American government on Arafat and the Palestinian authority to keep the word they already gave ... before a word is said to Israel," Gingrich said to cheers.

Gingrich also accused the US news media of being "the witting or unwitting ally of Arafat ... in an information warfare campaign against Israel" by portraying the housing project as an improper "settlement" in "Arab East Jerusalem" rather than a permissible project in an undivided city.

"Israel is not enduring a cold peace. Israel is enduring a war by other means," he declared. "Israel's enemies in the region are attempting to achieve through terror and coordinated propaganda what their armies could not achieve in battle—the defeat of Israel."

Arafat's spokesman Wednesday slammed Gingrich for saying Washington should pressure Palestinians and not Israel over a crisis in peace moves.

"Mr Gingrich will not be able to improve his bad image with the American people by attacking the Palestinian people and President Arafat in order to satisfy the Jewish lobby in the United States," spokesman Marwan Kanafani said in a statement.

"Gingrich did not show only a shameful ignorance of international politics but he also contributed to supporting the Israeli extremists to continue challenging the international community and to commit more violations against the political and human rights of the Palestinian people." ■

LA Times-Wshington Post News Service

They love MacDonald's, hard rock and hate Israel

Continued from page 1

turn, informed the police about the rest of "the gang."

Abdel Rahman Al Kayed told *The Star* that he and other schoolmates had been active in distributing anti-peace pamphlets since last year.

"It was a democratic way of expressing our feelings," he said. "Then things got serious three weeks ago. We burnt tyres in front of the Israeli embassy. We were angry because of Israeli practices in Palestine."

Originally most of the boys attended the Arab Modern School. However, the school principal expelled them and they had to go to other schools, one source said.

He added that the pupils had "a disruptive behavior" and even verbally fought with their teachers.

But Abdel Rahman's mother has a different story. She said that she was forced to transfer her son to a new school, two days before his arrest.

"His school grades were not improving, and I was worried about his future," she said.

Once in custody, the boys soon confessed after slight roughing up, according to Abdel Rahman.

Most families would not say whether or not their boys were subjected to harsh treatment while in police custody. But Mrs Mesha'l alleged that her son Al'a was slapped by police.

Other families protested the way police arrested their sons. "It was four in the morning when they [police] rang the bell, frightening the whole household," Mrs Al Kayed said.

However, Mr Mahmoud Adelih, Imad's father, who is also being released today had no complaints about police procedures. "They were very polite, they searched the house in a very civilized way," he said. Adelih said he had no idea what his son was up to and was shocked like the rest of the families. Adelih said there was no evidence that his son was involved in anti-peace activities.

Ahmad Aqil, the father of Mohammad, said the boys were merely overzealous teenagers. Since no formal charges were made yet, "I believe the case is over," he said.

Police was not available for comment on this case. ■

Election year starts with political bickering

Continued from page 1

hold in an elections year.

Government officials argue that to hold an extraordinary session now would be giving deputies a free for all election platform to hammer down the government. This is something that would not at all be compatible with parliamentary democracy.

However, some believe that the government has not closed the door on this issue. They say the government is ready to discuss any issue with deputies in an unofficial session. Such sessions can either be held at the gallery of the Lower House or even under the dome of the chamber. Officials stress that the participants would discuss what would be an "unofficial agenda."

But others point out that if this is really the government attitude then they would really be shooting themselves in the foot. Any dialogue of any sort would be like opening a can of worms, something which the government has tried to avoid in the first place.

Deputies' demands are abound. They would be likely to challenge the government on all issues: The one-man one-vote election formula, administrative divisions, and the reduction of voter's age among others.

Preparations for the elections have started on all its technical, formal, legal and administrative aspects. Interior Minister, Natheer Ersheid, held meetings with governors for the preparations for the elections.

However, the final decision lies with His Majesty King Hussein. But, the King's stay in Jordan won't be for long as he will leave to Denmark for a three-day official visit.

Thus, the announcement of a final elections date is not expected to be made soon.

On another level, Deputy Prime Minister for Services and Minister of Administrative Development Abdullah Nsour, and Minister of Environment Tawfiq Kreishan, have resigned from the House. However, this is still causing widespread controversy among deputies.

What is giving the elections a more heated dimension, is that they will be held after the foundation of the National Constitutional Party (NCP), an amalgamation of eight centrist parties.

Islamists expect the government to support candidates of this party in the coming elections, bearing in mind that Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali and his brother Abdel Hadi Al Majali are the architects of the new party. ■

Political process dissipates after Hebron

Continued from page 1

settlers and held them in custody for interrogation.

Over the next several hours, hundreds of Palestinians fought running street battles with Israeli troops in clashes along the boundary between Israeli and Palestinian police control.

Israel transferred four-fifths of the city to Palestinian self-rule in January but retained a large army presence near the downtown compounds where some 400 Jewish settlers live.

Two more Palestinians—identified as Mansour Taha Ahmad, 15, and Nader Abdel Khaleq Sayed, 24—died when metal-cored rubber bullets fired by Israeli forces penetrated their skulls.

"I just happened to be passing by," said Zain Jabari, 30, limping from a rubber bullet to the leg, who said he saw a fight starting and pitched in. "We were resisting the occupation army. We were throwing everything—bottles, stones, molotov cocktails. ... If the occupiers and Netanyahu's government want an Intifada, we're ready. If they want peace, we're also ready."

The Nablus-based Center for Palestine Research and Studies found for the first time last month a Palestinian majority, 52 to 41 percent, favoring the proposition that "there is no possibility to reach a solution acceptable to the two parties." The sample of 1,542 respondents claimed a 3 percent margin of error.

In other questions, 38 percent—about double the previous year's results—supported a return to "armed attacks," a euphemism for suicide bombings in Israel. Another 30 percent expressed approval of Intifada-style confrontations.

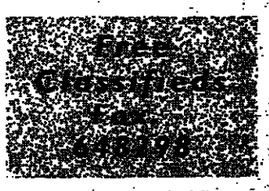
Israelis, too, have found it easy to fall back on language and stereotypes that predated their first diplomatic accord with the PLO. Newspaper and television commentary speaks much more often now of "the Arabs" and what it calls their unalterable enmity to Israel.

Panorama polls of 1,000 Jews, conducted in July and again last month, indicated a reversal on the prospect of "real peace with the Arabs" in coming years. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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Prince Ra'ad patronizes Amman-Dead Sea Ultra Marathon

HIS ROYAL Highness Prince Ra'ad bid Zeid, chief chamberlain, was among the first supporters for the runners who participated in the 5th Amman-Dead Sea Ultra Marathon, which took place 4 April. The marathon, organized by Forte Grand Hotel, was sponsored by the Coca Cola Company, British Airways and I.G. About 165 runners, from Jordan and other countries, participated. The Prince awarded the winners with Coca-Cola trophies. Mr Percy Dunn, a South African diplomat, came in first place. In support of this marathon and its causes, British Airways also donated two complimentary tickets. The funds raised will go to the Society for the Care of Neurological Patients. ■

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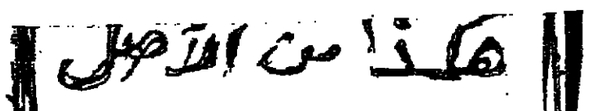
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10 APRIL 1997

Einstein's house a source of controversy

Continued from page

...ganic group that includes ...family descendants and ...organizations ranging ...from Jerusalem's Hebrew ...University to the New Je... ...ey chapter of an anti-... ...vivisection league.

Smith said Einstein ...always loathed the idea ...that his house might ...become a tourist attrac... ...tion and often pleaded it to be preserved as a ...place of contemplati... ...and research for scholar...

That wish was honore... ...by East Germany's com... ...munist governmen... ...which designated the as a historical land... ...mark and renovated it ...in the 1979 centen... ...ary of Einstein's birth. ...During the 40-year exis... ...tence of the German ...Democratic Republic, ...access to the house was ...restricted by that govern... ...ment's Academy of Sci... ...ences. It was reserved pri... ...marily as a guest house ...for prominent physicists.

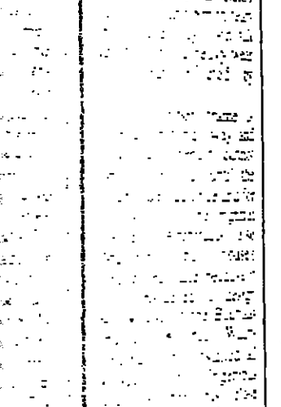
After Germany was ...united in 1990, the vil... ...won the first big ...battle by wresting ...control of Einstein's prop... ...erty from the state of ...Brandenburg. But since Smith has managed ...to retain custody of research with the heirs, ...uphold Ein... ...creating a ...refuge for place to special a of Ein...

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JORDAN WEEK

An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

King undergoes successful surgery

■ His Majesty King Hussein underwent a successful prostate surgery at the Mayo Clinic in the USA. The King's private physician, Dr Samir Farraj said "The operation was successful and there were no complications whatsoever." The surgery was to remove an enlarged portion ot the King's prostate gland. "It was a routine operation for a benign enlargement of the prostate. His Majesty went through the operation without any problems..." said Dr David Barrett of the Mayo Clinic, who conducted surgery. He said that there was no evidence of any traces of cancer.



Women in the municipalities

■ The role of women in public life is increasing thanks to the initiatives of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma. More women for instance are becoming members of municipal councils throughout the country than ever before. Today their number has increased to 28, having been bolstered from 13. This is in line with the National Women's Strategy that was recently drawn up after a series of meetings organized by the National Jordanian Committee for Women Affairs. On another issue, another woman has been appointed is a judge. She is the second woman in the Kingdom to be appointed to such a high ranking post.

Islamists win in JDA elections

■ Islamists clenched victory in last week's elections of the Jordan Doctors Association (JDA). Islamist Bassem Al Dajani was re-elected for the second time running. Islamists also won four seats of the JDA council. The nationalists only won a seat on the council.

Diabetes in Jordan

■ Diabetes could be a killer if the necessary precautions are not taken. A recent study carried out in Jordan found out more and more young people are becoming diabetics. What is worrying doctors in this country is that the disease is increasingly striking the 20 plus age groups. The study found that up to 20 percent of young people were diabetics. In the United States the figure was only 3.5 percent. The study which was carried out by the University of Science and Technology, is said to be the most extensive in the region and probably the world. It, looked at three villages in Jordan: Al Sareeh in Irbid, Sakhra in Ajloun and Al Mazar in the south. The study found that 15.4 percent of the 20 plus age group were diabetics, the number increases to 23 percent for the over 40 age groups. In Sakhra, the figures are more alarming. About 25.5 percent of the 20 and over age group were diabetic, the number shot up to 45 percent for the above 40 age group. In Al Mazar the figures were 23 percent for the first group and 38 percent for the second. What is worrying about these results is that half of the population of this country is under 20 years old.

Hunger strike till death!

■ A Jordanian patriot goes on hunger strike! This must be one of the rarest and bravest things anyone could do. A last ditch attempt, it is the ultimate in sacrifice. A tribute must be paid to Adeeb Issa, the man who have gone on a hunger strike in the Nuns Hospital in Irbid. He is protesting the Israeli actions of settlement building on Jabal Abu Ghniem. Now in his twilight years, but with a keen sense of history, Issa is a true Jordanian patriot, and an intellectual of magnitude proportions. He has over 90 manuscripts, but only published 1 book. However, he built himself a "museum" in Al Husn. He gave all his belongings to the Nuns Hospital in return for being looked after.

Caught in the act

■ A gas station in the King Abdallah Gardens street was closed down for selling diluted gas to customers. The owners were mixing gasoline with another substance. It was the inspectors of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Co., (JPRC) who found out that the owners of the station were up to no good and alerted the police immediately. The owners are now held in custody. JPRC officials later said that such an action by the gas vendors was uncalled for.

Journalists turn politicians

■ About 25 journalists will be standing for the parliamentary elections to be held in the autumn. These include such famous names as Tareq Masarwah, the chief editor of *Al Arab Al Yawm*, that is to start publications in May. If *Al Mithaq* is not mistaken, the publisher of the new daily, Raid Al Hourb will also be pitching in for one of the Karak seats. Other journalists include Taher Al Adwan, Saleh Al Qalab, Abd Al Salam Al Tarawneh and Abd Al Rahim Ghanam will also be there.

Writers for elections

■ Jordan Writer's Association (JWA) are gearing up for elections on 2 May. Secretary General of the Arab Writer's Union Fakhri Qawar is the hot favorite for the JWA presidency. He will be competing against 12 others who include non other than the current president of the association, Ibrahim Al Abbasi. However he is joined by other writer's such as Sulieman Al Azrai, the head of the Irbid Cultural Directorate, Sulieman Al Nahas of Hashd, poet Abdallah Radwan, Mawfaq Mahadin, journalist Ramadan Al Rawashdeh and Dr Walid Seif, an Arabic Lecturer in the University of Jordan. This year's election is likely to be a heated one. Already there is talk of a division in the association and the subject as usual is the process of normalization with Israel. Qawar, Al Nahas, Mahadin, and poet Basel Rafieh believe that there should be no normalization with Israel under any circumstances. However, they are counterposed by what is seen as the more pragmatic trend in the association who argue that while they oppose normalization they also believe in a "constructive dialogue" with Jewish intellectuals. Holders of this view are Radwan, Al Azrai and Seif. The council of the JWA will also face elections. Already there are 40 writers who are standing.

Pupil dies in school

■ A 12-year old died after being "slightly" hit by a fellow pupil at school. After an autopsy, it was concluded that the death occurred because the boy's heart muscles were already inflated. The doctors said that this was the result of problems in his heart valves. However, both the pupil involved in the fight and the school are still under investigation.

The National Constitutional Party

Newcomer stumbles into the political arena

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

"REJUVENATION, DEMOCRACY and Unity," are the slogans of the coming National Constitutional Party (NCP), that is in the process of being formed.

Dr Abdel Salam Al Majali, the current prime minister was originally behind the merger idea, back in late 1995. However the concerned parties continued to dither.

Then all of a sudden, or may be because of the coming elections which are expected to be held this autumn, the eight parties vouched to unite at any cost. Could it be because of their small size is a question that is left to political pundits to mull over.

What is known for certain is that since their creation political parties have remained in the political doldrums and their size contributed to their weakness. On top of that, these parties suffered constantly from splits.

The party, an amalgamation of eight, is due to become legal on 1 May. It is in effect a pro-establishment party that now has a single platform and agenda: pro-peace with Israel and the wholehearted adoption of the World Bank restructuring program. "Jordan first" is a common theme in the its social agenda. What is more significant however, is that the party stresses the Jordanization of political life. Observers argue what is really meant by this is the creation of a more "moderate" political force as a counterweight to what is seen as the historical dominance of Islamists, leftists and pan-Arabists whose strong alliance against the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty have upset successive governments in this country.

"Conservative centrist" is the new label that is being given to the new party by political analysts. It will run the coming elections under a united list to compete the Islamic Action Front (IAF).

But for a new merged party observers argue that it is politically risky to enter the general elections under a united list because none of the other parties, excluding the IAF, ran the elections in such manner.

However, the representation of these parties in the current Lower House does not exceed 14 members, despite the fact that they dominate three blocs of 38 members. Same centrist parties recruited Lower House deputies after the elections' results. The same is true for the municipal elections held in July 1995. It was later found that the centrists parties claimed victory only because a not inconsiderable number of candidates who stood for the elections later joined these parties.

The eight centrists involved in the merger have yet to complete the process. By the end of this month the parties will announce their dissolution and go for the big one: Unity under one roof.

The secretaries-general of these parties held a meeting, last week, under Mr Hakam Khair, the secretary general of Watan (Homeland) party. They agreed to register the party in Ministry of Interior during the first week of May, a step which will come after their dissolution.



Abdel Hadi Al Majali

In the meeting they also agreed that every party has to submit a 100-name list that will form an 800-member founding committee for the new NCP. Each member has to pay a fee of JD 100.

The party heads agreed on a common platform—however these are still general headlines. The party's program "will cover most aspects of life in Jordan, and does not differ much from government policies," said Mr Abdel Hadi Al Majali, an NCP key founding member, and head of the Al Ahd (Pledge) Party, the mainstream in the NCP.

The relation of the party to other political parties will be "competitive" but its relations with the government will be "integrative and consultative," Al Majali said during a lecture, last week, in the Center for Jordanian Studies.

Al Majali pointed out that the integration of the eight parties in one body will give them a strong ground to compete in the political battle, "something that was lost in past years because of the influence of the Islamist and leftist parties." Al Majali suggested that most of these parties are "linked to outside groups."

NCP sources added that the eight party leaders will elect among themselves one secretary general and two deputies to rule during the transitional period, which will not exceed one year. Then a general assembly will elect a permanent leadership.

The eight parties are presently holding their conferences to discuss the main guidelines of the NCP. The Politburo of Al Ahd has already unanimously agreed on the internal system of the NCP and its main guidelines. Before the end of this month the Central Committee of Al Ahd will recommend to its Politburo to dissolve the party and pave the road for complete integration within the NCP.

Also the United Arab Democratic Party (Al Wa'd) will hold a general conference tomorrow, Friday, to dissolve the party and integrate within NCP. Al Watan (Homeland) Party is to hold a conference on 25 April, for the same purpose. It is expected that all the eight parties will complete the final procedures for integration by the end of this month.

The rest of the parties, "must" hold their general conferences before the end of this month, as agreed upon during last week's meeting. These eight parties also include the Jordanian Arab Masses (Al Jamaheer), the Jordanian National Alliance (Tajmou'), Progressive and Justice, (Al Takdum wal Adala) Al Yaqatha (reawakening) and the Popular Unity (Al Wahdawiyoon). ■



Jadoun

Trouble continues between clearance agents and Lloyds at Aqaba

Continued from page 1

dealt the team at the beginning, but since two months ago it started to interfere more and more in our work as clearance agents."

The team's measures have even gone to the extent of interfering with the implementation of the customs procedure at the Aqaba port.

"The shipper has the ultimate right to change the manifest of the cargo that may be re-exported from the harbor to the free zone in Zarka or any other destination inside or outside the Kingdom," he said. "This could be made by a mutual agreement between the shipper and the shipping agent," Jadoun pointed out.

Despite this fact, Lloyds strongly protest these changes that are made at the Aqaba customs. "They claim that such cargo is going to Iraq," Jadoun said.

The syndicate president added that these measures have forced them to send a memo to the Chairman of the Federation of the Jordanian Chambers of Commerce, Haider Murad. The memo stated that such action on the part of Lloyds is a violation of Jordanian sovereignty and interference in its external trade relations.

Some economic experts say that there is no need for Lloyds to continue in Aqaba as UN sanctions on Iraq have been partially lifted in the light of implementation of the oil for food deal.

It is pointed out that their existence at Aqaba is costly and time wasting, for businessmen and clearance agents.

Some shippers pointed out that inspection of cargo could take up to two weeks.

Moreover, the opening of the sealed containers at the port causes damage to some of the contents, Jadoun added. There are many foodstuff commodities at Aqaba and the free zone warehouses awaiting Lloyds approval. They have been held up for the last six months.

The issue has become so bad that the Jordanian government was forced, two weeks ago, to take it up with the United Nations. ■



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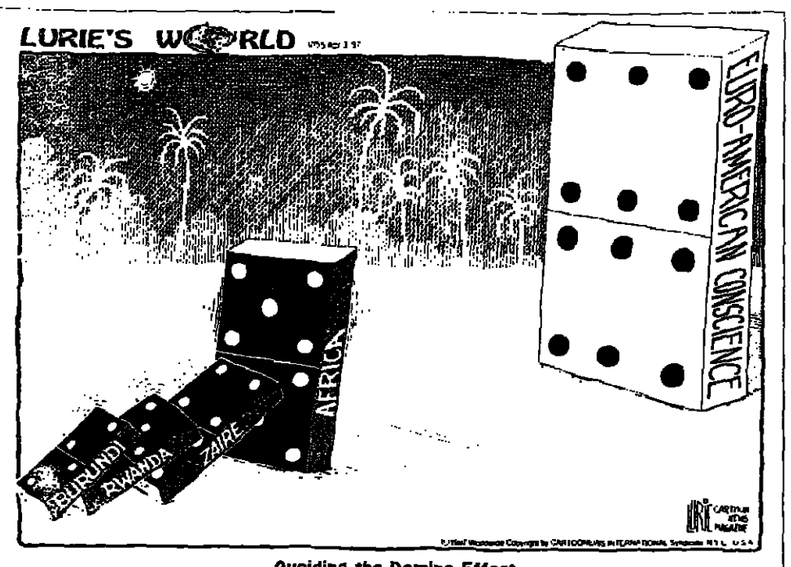
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Running out of options

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU returned to Israel from his brief Washington meeting with President Bill Clinton a triumphant man. He has refused to budge on his decision to build a Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem, which is an occupied territory the fate of which is still under negotiations. He has brushed aside attempts by the Clinton administration to convince him to honor Israel's obligations under the Oslo accords. Thus, he has every reason to feel good about himself.

He returned to Israel more determined than ever to force the Palestinians and their leadership to submit to the new realities he had created. Not surprisingly, he returned to a region where political chaos has paved the way to a spate of violence and counter violence that has destroyed the peace process.

Today Israel's hawks have absolute control over the political and military initiative in the region. The Washington meeting has isolated Israel further from the international community, but more importantly it has fractured the basis of America's Middle East policy. Netanyahu's triumph has resulted in an irrecoverable damage to America's standing in the Arab world, where Israel will always remain a prisoner of geography and a historical intruder.

The cycle of violence that Netanyahu's policies have unleashed will not end with an Israeli iron-fist reaction. So far the killing of Palestinian youths in Hebron and other West Bank cities has only inflamed the situation and awakened the Palestinian Intifada from its short slumber. But for how long can Netanyahu's soldiers continue to shoot at unarmed civilians under occupation and get away with it? The Palestinians are determined to stand out against Israeli schemes aimed in the end at wiping them out from their homeland.

The United States can no longer act as an honest broker between the Palestinians and the Israelis. It never had the moral courage and the political willingness to assume that role. That is why it wants to keep the UN and Europe away from the political process. But by doing that, it is not only alienating itself from this region and its people, but also denying Arabs and Israelis a rare chance to coexist peacefully and end decades of war and conflict.

While the Palestinians appear to be the main losers of a shattered peace process in the Middle East, the truth of the matter is that we all stand to lose—including the Israelis. It is easy to understand how Netanyahu's political myopia could cloud his vision, but what we don't understand is how could the Americans fail to see the dangerous repercussions of losing a political initiative they have worked so hard to nurture since the late 1970s?

If we don't have a peace process in the Middle East and if the Palestinians continue to offer young martyrs every day, and if no Israeli can feel safe at home again and if the young generations grow up on hate and mutual distrust, what then is the future of this region? And if we don't have a peace we can be proud of, what is left for us to do? ■

Letters to the Editor

A word of advice

To The Editor,

While I think JTV usually does a good job in covering the crisis in the West Bank and Gaza, there has been little by way of commentary and analysis. Take last week's meeting of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with US President Bill Clinton.

While no breakthrough was achieved on reactivating the peace process and that Israel remains adament about the building of a settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim, JTV just papered over the issue.

It reported in a casual about way that the meeting was "positive" when in fact the two leaders had reached nowhere. President Clinton by that time had failed to convince Netanyahu to stop the settlement process or move one iota towards reconciling differences with the Palestine National Authority.

It would certainly be wise for JTV to call a spade a spade. We are forever living in an ever shrinking global village where the truth is not a monopoly of one station or source.

Maher Abu Laban
Amman

Resurrecting peace

To The Editor,

Your editorial (*Star* 29 March) on resurrecting the peace was excellent, I thought. It is difficult to know whether the Israeli attitude is entirely cynical, or whether it reflects a pathological inability to understand the true nature of their actions [an inability perhaps connected with the "eternal victim" mentality of an ally of the most powerful country on the planet?]

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A view from America

Middle East diplomacy must be precise

By Carrie Nelle Moye
Star US correspondent

AMBIGUITY IN diplomacy is a frequently useful tool to approach sensitive problems, especially for a mediator attempting to bridge differences between adversaries. In the case of the Middle East conflict, ambiguity served its purpose for some time until it brought Israelis and Arabs to the Madrid Conference in 1990. The result was a peace treaty between Jordan and Israel which seems to be holding despite severe strains.

The Madrid initiative also resulted in a series of agreements between Palestinians and Israelis: the Oslo accords, the Washington agreements, the Hebron agreement and the establishment of a Palestinian Authority in Gaza and parts of the West Bank. Israel and Syria/Lebanon were engaging in intensive negotiations at the Wye Plantation in the US, but were interrupted when former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres called for early elections in the spring of 1996, which he lost to Benjamin Netanyahu.

These negotiations have not been resumed because the new Israeli administration presented a different interpretation of the entire peace process and its expected outcome. All dealings, agreements and negotiations had been carried out under US sponsorship, with US prodding, and where agreements were reached, the US President (the office, more than the man) was a witness and guarantor.

Now, despite back-and-forth official visits, the fragile peace foundation is coming apart. Humankind is witnessing with horror and dismay the rapid collapse of all that has been achieved. Egypt, the first Arab country to sign a peace accord with Israel, is extremely unhappy and President Mubarak is under severe internal pressure to cease all dealings with Israel. In spite of the immense efforts on the part of His Majesty King Hussein, the Jordanian population is losing its patience with Netanyahu's continuing disregard of the various peace agreements enacted prior to his becoming Prime Minister.

Other supporters of Middle East peace, and friends of the United States in the Arab world (Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries) and in the Islamic community are losing patience and face in the eyes of their constituencies. Calls for the abandoning of the peace process are becoming louder. The only winners are the extremists. Why has this happened?

The reason is quite simple: Ambiguity still is being used but is beyond its usefulness, especially by the US administration, ostensibly the mediator, honest broker and guarantor in the peace process. After Madrid and the signing of agreements, clarity is the essence of progress.

If Palestinians and Israelis differ in their interpretations, it is up to the guarantor to spell out unambiguously the spirit and letter of agreements. Unfortunately for the peace process itself and the peoples suffering from the reversal of that process, this guarantor—the United States—is taking a back seat and allowing this unique historic opportunity to slip away.

The actions (versus lip service) of the US in the past few weeks have undermined the credibility of Washington as an honest broker. Two US vetoes in two weeks, a negative vote in the General Assembly, a futile mission by Dennis Ross to the Middle East and empty statements by senior US officials and spokespersons not only have alienated one party to the Middle East peace process but also puzzled and shocked the rest of the world, especially Europe.

This is not a call to President Clinton to take sides but rather an appeal to spell out Washington's understanding and interpretation of what has been agreed upon. Several questions need to be answered:

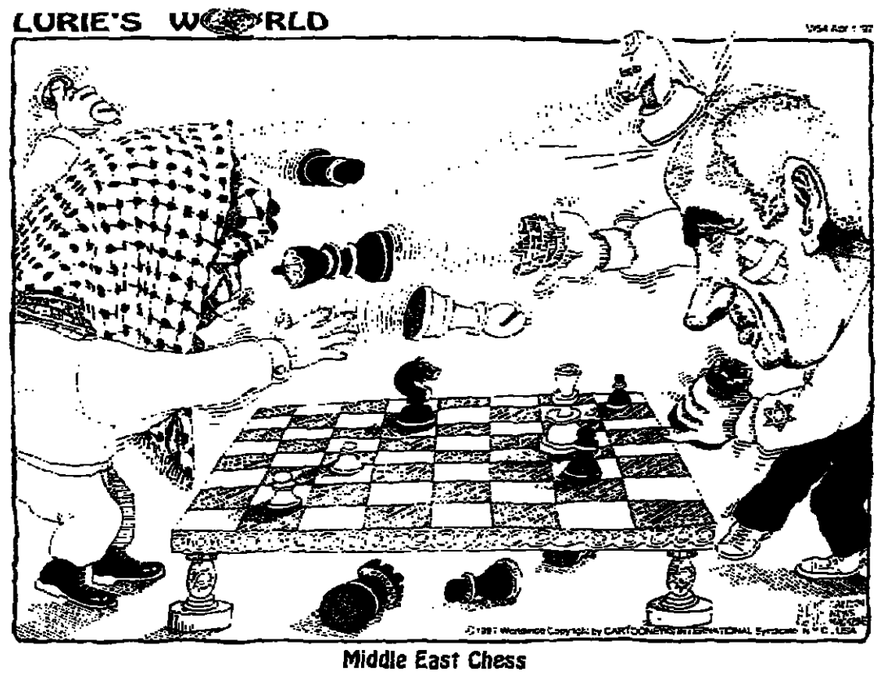
- Are agreements signed by Rabin and Peres binding on Netanyahu?
- Is Israel legally permitted to continue building settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank?
- Is Netanyahu's government bound to complete its withdrawal from West Bank areas and towns as agreed in terms of territory and time schedule?
- Is Netanyahu's government obligated to resume negotiations with Syria and Lebanon from the point they reached in 1996?
- Are all relevant UN resolutions valid or not?

If the US government truly is interested in pushing ahead with the Middle East peace process, then it must take a clear stand, one way or another, in outlining its understandings, intentions, and objectives. One can not escape intentions and objectives. One can not escape the impression that the US has been telling each party, behind closed doors, what it wants to hear, but not what it really means.

If Clinton supports Israel's annexation of territories, it is time to say it clearly and loudly. If it does not, the US government should delineate its position just as clearly.

Hiding behind the pretext that the concerned parties should reach their own understandings in direct negotiations is a smoke screen. Washington, more than any other power, knows that this is not possible. Otherwise, Washington would have let Iraq and Kuwait sort out their differences without UN resolutions and military interference.

The United Nations was created to settle conflicts when parties cannot agree on solutions. Decency and honesty (including the rights of peoples in the Middle East to peace, security, progress and prosperity) aside, just plain pragmatism—US national interests—require a courageous US stand. Global leadership demands a price if it is to be retained. ■



Middle East Chess

Mayor Raed Salah

Israeli excavations beneath Al Aqsa Mosque continue

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sheikh Raed Salah, Mayor of the (Israeli) Arab town of Um Al Fahem, is among the leading Islamist figures in Palestine. For over two decades he played a marked role in promoting Islamic awareness among the one million-strong Arabs in Israel proper, the land occupied by the Zionists in 1948. Sheikh Salah recently toured the network of subterranean tunnels beneath and around the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. *Palestine Times* correspondent in Jerusalem, Khaled Amayreh, spoke to him about what he saw. Excerpts follow:


Salah in one of the tunnels

Are you sure there is a new tunnel being excavated beneath the Mosque?

Indeed, I am. I saw that the Israeli authorities placed some wooden boards at the entrance of the new tunnel, but as we removed the slabs and penetrated the tunnel from its south-eastern corner, we found out that it extended alongside the western wall of Al Masjid Al Aqsa. We also saw that it was only four metres away from the foundations of the Mosque. We walked through the tunnel about a kilometer, but didn't reach its end. However, we saw that the tunnel bifurcated in many directions forming "sub-tunnels."

Did you actually see signs of fresh excavations there?

Yes, we did. We saw signs of fresh unearthing which proves that the work was still continuing. This obviously means that the Israelis are widening the tunnel in all directions. In other words, the matter is much more than old subterranean canals used for the disposition of water.

How far is the new tunnel from the Marwani Mosque, the basement Mosque of Al Aqsa Mosque?

This tunnel is relatively farther away from the Marwani Mosque as it is located in the south-eastern corner of Al Haram Al Sharif. However, one must point out that the Israeli excavation authorities started digging another tunnel extending in the direction of Marwani Mosque, so it is not safe anyway.

What do you make out of all of this?

A. I believe that the Al Aqsa Mosque faces a grave danger, and it is only a matter of time before something "catastrophic" happens. Muslims should and must wake up from their sleep, because the First Qibla and the Third Holiest of the Islamic Shrines is in danger. Moreover, the Israelis are continuing to destroy and unearth the historical Muslim cemeteries adjacent to the eastern and western walls of the Al Aqsa Mosque, which include tombs of some of the Companions of the Prophet. I want to emphasize that we are not talking here about hypothetical matters, or even a looming danger. We are talking about an existing danger. There are already ominous cracks in the southern and south-western walls of the Mosque. In fact, some stones have already fallen... so what are we waiting for?

The Wakf authorities in Jerusalem said you were exaggerating the danger?

A. I wouldn't be happy if I assured you that we are not talking about a new tunnel not an ancient canal. Unfortunately, Wakf people don't know the full truth, and even can't say all they know. ■

Middle East Beat
by Khairi Janbek

Islamist participation

THINK TANKS and Policy institutes in the West play a crucial role in advising their governments on the best ways of handling certain issues. Such think tanks usually have great influence that verges on the executive implementation of public and international policies.

The case in hand is the recent debate going on in the corridors of such institutions in the US about Islamic organizations in the Arab and Islamic worlds, and their possible future role in participating in the decision-making of their countries.

Their has been a marked shift in attitude in the formula of drawing examples from Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Afghanistan, Algeria, and Egypt, to a more dialogue-orientated policy. The debate is still raging without either side making any recognizable gains. But the fact remains that even entertaining such an option of dialogue with the Islamists is enough to ring warning bells in the whole of the Islamic world.

It does not seem that the American policy institutes' debate is related to either the uncontrollability of the Islamist groups actions, or their possible viability as alternatives to the existing political order. They are rather directly related to the Refah-led government in Turkey, and its experiences in playing the role of the dresser between the highly volatile region of the eastern Mediterranean, and the European continent. Though in fairness Jordan has been feeling the consequences of this debate throughout its recent dialogue with the American think tanks.

The advent of Refah to power in Turkey initially created misgivings among the NATO allies of Turkey—a sit and wait policy was being followed by the West, Mr Erbakan was trying to feel his way in the maze of Islamic politics and contacts. At the end of the day, Turkey remained part of NATO, trade relations and military cooperation continues with Israel, and a free enterprise economic policy is still being pursued with the possibility of joining the EU as a full partner being entertained.

Internally, Turkey started having its own share of overzealous Islamists emerging occasionally, with their habitual demands, but Refah has played the balancing role with them to a good degree of success without any major rift with the secularist force in Turkey.

However it would be a mistake if such think-tanks take Turkey as the main paradigm for an accommodation with Islamist groups, and take Refah as the archetypal representative of political Islam. The reason here are obvious, for Turkey has a socio-economic structure with a strong tradition in the roots of secularism as a major counter-balance to any fundamental changes.

There is also a strong subjective feeling within the structure of civil society, that the individual vote in elections is an important vote and counts eventually in the scheme of things. Not to mention of course, the role of the military in guarding the republic's constitution that is imbued with what became to be known in the modern history of Turkey as Kemalism. All those ingredients make Turkey and its government a peculiar case rather than the norm with Islamist involvement.

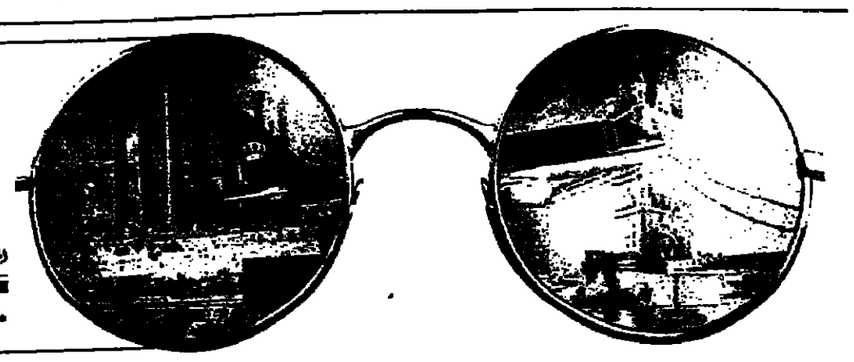
It must be emphasized therefore, that the ongoing debate about the nature and content of dialogue with Islamic groups, to take into consideration the general phenomenon into account, rather than rely on models that tend to be the anomalous case. Many Arab and Islamic countries have worked hard to establish their moderate outreach to the world, and their views and experiences should be taken into consideration, before the Islamist debate becomes totally illogical. ■

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ROYAL JORDANIAN الملكية الأردنية
Reflecting the Change.



Business scene

■ Jordan Hotels and Tourism Co., generated a profit of JD 3.4 million in 1996. Revenues collected from the operational measures at Inter.Continental (Jordan) Hotel last year reached JD 11.6 million. The company's budget by year end recorded a growth of 12.7 percent compared with 1995 to hit JD 24 million. Shareholders rights rose by 16.5 percent to reach JD 20.5 million in 1996. Estimated investments in developing the hotel may reach JD 20 million.

■ The volume of revenues generated by the Jordan Electric Co reached JD 11.5 million in 1996. The company was able to raise the capacity of its stations and provide electricity to more than 49 towns and housing complexes. Total number of villages and rural areas that are provided with electric power until the end of last year reached 480. Budget assets rose in 1996 by 13 percent to reach JD 170.4 million. Infrastructure assets in the company registered a growth ratio of six percent in 1996 to reach JD 67.5 million.

■ The volume of trade exchange between Jordan and Russia reached $60 million in 1996 compared with $8-10 million in the early 1990s. This accounts for a rise of 11% against the 1995 figures.

Russian exports to Jordan last year were $50.3 million, generating an increase of 19% while Jordanian exports to Russia in the same year were $6.3 million.

Russia signed contract with Jordan to help in a joint venture to produce chemicals from the Dead Sea minerals, at total cost of $600 million.

■ Hot cheques over last year recorded an increase of 10 percent to total 450,000, according to latest official statistics. As a result 15,000 people have been held in custody.

Financial company seeks to rejuvenate east Jerusalem

AMMAN (Star)—It is becoming increasingly clear that the Palestinian economy must be rejuvenated if it is to counter the menacing Israeli threat. What is becoming even more clear is that for the Palestinians to pull themselves by the boot straps they must have urgent financial help from outside. The Palestine National Authority has long realized that, now financiers from across the Arab world are realizing that too.

It is with this in mind that Arab businessmen gathered in Amman earlier this week to set up a $100 million company to help create the basis for a viable Palestinian economy in the heart of east Jerusalem.

Cynics may describe the move as a little too late since Israel long started to Judize the city. However, the venture is seen as a major snub to Israeli policy makers and the first sign of practical Arab action to turn the tidal wave of Israeli domination in the eastern side of the city.

During a one-day conference titled "the National Forum for Jerusalem" convened last Saturday at the Amman Chamber of Industry, more than 250 economic businessmen from Jordan, Palestine and the Arab world established the Jerusalem Fund for the Joint Investment Co., (JFJIC). The company is to be registered at the British Virgin Island and will be in charge of creating specialized investments funds.

Participants in the gathering put up 20 percent of the proposed capital.

The gathering is the result of the fruitful efforts of a three-man committee to counter the latest Israeli actions in east Jerusalem. It included Abdel Majeed Shoman (Chairman of the Arab Bank and a share-founder of the JFJIC), Munib Al Masri and Hassib Al Sabagh. Financial heavyweights in the Arab world, these are also the founding committee for the new company.

Mr Shoman said that the company will set up agricultural, touristic and housing projects in Jerusalem and create job opportunities for the Arab residents.

These are essential for a vibrant local economy, something which the Israelis have long been seeking to destroy.

Al Masri describes the newly established fund as the nucleus for a unified Arab effort to protect Jerusalem against Israeli settlement plans and activate the economic movement in Jerusalem and help Palestinian merchants and businessmen to open their shops and manage their business.

Mr Faisal Al Husseini, who is in charge of the Jerusalem file in the Palestine National Authority and attended the forum said that the Israeli policy is targeted at isolating Jerusalem and other Palestinian institutions from the international community.

Israel also plans to completely change the geographic and demographic construction of the city to dominate the land and its inhabitants.

He stressed that Palestinians and Arabs can combat such policy by supporting the presence of Arab residents there and protect their lands from confiscation.

To achieve this goal, Al Masri elaborates, it is necessary to carry out new projects in the city to meet the housing needs of its Arab people.

Khalil Al Tafkaji, a researcher conducted a study on the housing situation in Jerusalem. It shows that about 35,000 in the city are in a pressing need for rehabilitation. This issue can be solved by the JFJIC.

Al Tafkaji added that Israel dominates 74 percent of east Jerusalem, six percent of the lands were confiscated to make streets, it took six percent. The remaining 14 percent is left for Palestinians.

Jerusalem is in need of 25,000 houses to meet the needs of the inhabitants, but the Arab population is only allowed to build 16,000 housing units.

Al Tafkaji points out that this requires a lot finance. About $20,000 is needed alone for the construction licences.

The newly-established company seeks to attract personal savings and finance from all firms to be invested in all productive fields. It also plans to deal in securities on international stock exchanges to explore investment opportunities and promote further investments.

Al Masri said that invitations were extended to Palestinian and Jordanian businessmen worldwide to take part in the company.

The company is still in its initial stages. A careful study is now planned pointing out the exact areas of development for the company. The headquarters of the company is yet to be located.

Shoman himself is responsible for opening channels with Arab businessmen, particularly in the Arabian Gulf to collect donations to finance projects in the east Jerusalem.

Khaldoun Abu Hassan, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industry said the gathering was important and stressed that "we have to do our best to support the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim existence in the Holy City."

Chairman of the Higher Council for Palestinian Tourism, Hani Abu Deiyeh said that lack of finance is the biggest problem facing the PNA.

He added that the main source of income in Jerusalem for many years has come from tourism and trade. However, through its policy to impose blockade on the city, Israel has destroyed its commercial institutions and thus many Palestinians were forced to leave the city.

But, through participation and support of Palestinian and Jordanian businessmen, Abu Deiyeh added we can help Jerusalemites to counter the Israeli expansionist policy to Judaize the city.

Hamdi Al Tabba, chairman of the Jordanian Businessmen Association, said that the gathering which comprised economic activities was constructive and stressed that investing in Jerusalem is a beneficial economic action, that helps to preserve the Arab and Islamic identity. ■



Participants in the conference

Business Chronicle

Arab Businessmen call for a halt in normalization with Israel

EGYPTIAN BUSINESSMEN are freezing their commercial deals with Israel. They stress that such a decision was independent and is in no way related to government pressure.

Pointing out that there is no official instruction in Egypt banning dealing with Israel, businessmen confirm that they are committed to a unified Arab stance that calls for a complete halt to the normalization process with Israel. Egyptian Businessmen Association (EBA) Chairman Taher Al Sharif said that such action is necessary to resurrect what he called "the psychological barrier" between Arabs and Israelis, something that was recreated by the hardline stance of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israel has to expect a sharp decline in its commercial ties with Arabs, as long as it continues to ignore Palestinian rights and insist on its expansionist policy of confiscating more Arab lands in Palestine.

Statistics reveal that the size of commercial exchange between Egypt and Israel reached $204 million in the first half of 1996 (including oil products). This is compared to an exchange of $197 million in 1995, according to figures released by the Egyptian Ministry of Economics.

This is not all. Many other Arab countries are in favor of suspending ties. These include Morocco (which was the first to call for normalization with Israel, but now takes an opposite stance), and the Arab Gulf, especially Qatar and Oman.

In these cases, Arab businessmen in those countries are at the forefront, in stopping initiatives and joint ventures with Israel. Qatar, for instance, has cancelled a joint natural gas deal.

It is high time that Arab states as well as Arab businessmen join forces to strengthen their position and launch a campaign against Israeli hegemony and obstinacy that gives no consideration to Arab rights.

In its last meeting, the ministerial council of the Arab League recommended that its member states freeze normalization as a protest against Israel's policy of building settlements.

Also the "National Forum for Jerusalem," which was convened in Amman early last week. With the participation of more than 250 Jordanian, Palestinian and Arab businessmen, a company was established for the salvation of Jerusalem from Judaization, at a capital of $100 million. A fund-raising campaign will be launched by the company's founders to build housing complexes for Arab inhabitants in Jerusalem, to counter the Israeli policy to force them to immigrate. Such steps could be a way in the right direction. ■

US Airways March load factor a record 75.2

ARLINGTON—US Airways traffic increased 11.9 percent in scheduled service for last March compared to the same time in 1996. The monthly load factor of 75.2 percent was an all-time record.

The increase of 11.9 percent in revenue passenger miles came on an increase of 5.3 per cent in available seat miles. For domestic travel the revenue passenger mile increase was 7.2 percent on an increase of 1.4 percent in available seat miles. For international travel, the revenue passenger mile increase was 98.2 percent while available seat miles rose by 85.4 percent.

The overall load factor of 75.2 percent for the month was 4.4 percent higher than the comparable figure for March 1996. The number of passengers carried for the month was 5.3 million, up 5.4 percent from 1996. The average length of journey—715.5 miles—was up 6.2 percent.

For the first three months of 1997, revenue passenger miles in scheduled service were up by 13.7 percent over the comparable period of 1996 while available seat miles were up by 7.3 percent, the system load factor for the period was 68.4 percent, an increase of 3.8 percentage points over 1996. The number of passengers boarded —14.9 million—was an increase of 7.2 percent and the average passenger journy of 713.9 miles was up by six per- cent. ■

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 9 April

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US$	0.7080	0.7100
	1.1510	1.1568
	0.4124	0.4145
	0.4801	0.4825
FFR	0.1227	0.1233
	0.5624	0.5652
	0.3667	0.3685
(100)	0.0419	0.0421

British Midland announces major new aircraft acquisition programme

BRITISH MIDLAND, the airline for Europe, is to place orders with Airbus Industries for 20 new aircraft, in a deal worth $1 billion.

The airline is to take delivery of eight A321s, 196-seat aircraft and 12 A320s, 160-seat aircraft phased over the next five years with three A321s entering service in the spring 1998. Built into the deal is an option for British Midland to upgrade the A320 order to the larger A321, should the demand for capacity exceed the airline's present forecasts.

The order is the largest so far placed by a British carrier for aircraft built by the European manufacturing consortium.

The choice of engines, between CFMI, a Franco-American consortium and IAE, partnership of Rolls Royce, MTU of Germany, Pratt and Whitney, the Japanese Aero Engine Consortium and Fiat Aviazione is to be finalized later, following negotiations with both suppliers.

Chairman, Sir Michael Bishop said: "This order is a significant vote of confidence in the future of our business and the future of European aviation."

The infrastructure constraints at European airports, which are likely to remain, mean that a growing airline such as British Midland has to increase aircraft capacity in order to maximize ntilization of slots. "We predict a continued healthy growth in demand for our services. The new flexible business-class seats in our Diamond Euro Class cabin provide more room and comfort for our customers but reduce the overall number of seats on each aircraft thus requiring additional capacity," he said

"The flexibility, capacity and technical sophistication offered by the A320 family of aircraft, ideally suits the predicted growth and route expansion of the airline during the next phase of the development of our business," Sir Michael added. ■

BritishBank increases profits by 20% in 1996

HSBC Holdings PLC, of which the BritishBank is a principal party, announced their 1996 results in March. The highlights show that operating profit before provisions was up 20% to £4,519 million while pre-tax profit was up 23% to £4.524 million. This resulted in a return on average shareholders funds of 21.3%.

The Group Chairman, Sir William Purves, commented that the good results demonstrated solid growth in business and improved profitability in all of the major geographic regions where the Group operates. The British Bank of the Middle East reported an attributable profit of £62 million compared with £58 million for 1995, an increase of 7%. BritishBank opened branches in Baku, Azerbijan and Seeb, Oman during 1996. HongKong Bank, also part of the HSBC Group, opened new offices in Australia, Bangladesh, Taiwan and the Philippines.

BritishBank is the largest and most widely represented international bank in the Middle East with 28 branches throughout the U.A.E., Jordan, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and Lebanon, an offshore banking unit in Bahrain and a new branch to be opened shortly in Ramallah.

This extensive regional coverage is enhanced by its associates SaudiBritish Bank and Egyptian British Bank. In addition to its Middle Eastern network the Bank has branches in Bombay and Trivandrum in Indian and Baku, Azerbijan. It also has Private Banking operations in London and Geneva.

BritishBank is a principal member of the HSBC Group since 1959. Headquartered in London with over 3,400 offices in 78 countries and assets as of 31 December '96 of $402 billion, the HSBC Group is among the world's largest banking and financial services organisations. Among the other principal members of the Group are HongKong Bank in Asia, Midland Bank in Europe and Marine Midland Bank in the United States of America. ■

IMF Looks into secret Israeli fund for Arafat

By Ross Dunn in Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S TRANSFER of almost £100 million in tax revenue to a secret bank account under the control of Yassir Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority, is being investigated by the International Monetary Fund.

Money has been deposited in the account since 1994 to reimburse the authority for export taxes levied on fuel intended for Palestinian consumers. But an internal IMF document says the account, with a Tel Aviv bank, is "not under the supervision or control of the Palestinian Finance Ministry."

According to Western diplomats, only two people can operate the account, Mr Arafat and Mohammed Rashid, his senior economic adviser. Other taxes that Israel has agreed to transfer to the authority were sent to banks outside Israel.

Haaretz, the Israeli daily, says at least part of the money deposited in the secret account was intended to elude the supervision of donor nations such as the United Nations. The newspaper said some of the funds were used to pay for the "bloated Palestinian security apparatus and the salaries of tens of thousands of superfluous clerks—purposes not authorized by the donor nations."

A senior Israeli official said some of the funds were intended for two different purposes. One was to get Mr Arafat, his family and a few senior officials away in the event of a coup. The other was a group of actions that the Arafat administration felt commited to finance in order to keep political power bases. This was also expenditure that donor nations would never approve, the official said.

But Palestinian Deputy Economic and Trade Minister, Dr Maher Al Kurd, defended such practices. "The Palestinian Authority has the power to create economic reserves for itself in case of an emergency—something like a civil war. It's a shame the donor nations and the state of Israel do not understand this."

The issue is to be raised before Israel's parliamentary finance committee next week. Silvan Shalcom, the co-ordinator for the committee, said "Previous governments transferred the funds to Arafat so that he would be so kind as to carry on with the Oslo process."

Avraham Shochat, a former Israeli Finance Minister, said the funds were transferred under arrangements made in the so-called Paris accords which govern economic cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians. ■

The Times

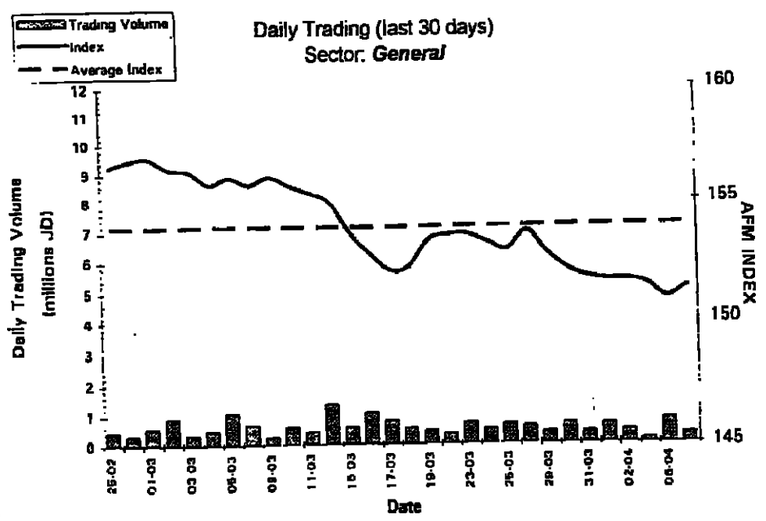
MARKET WATCH

5-8 April

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
%	◆ Al-Tanajeb 5.15 ◆ Bank of Jordan 4.96 ◆ Arab Food Industry 4.71	◆ Central Trade 5.41 ◆ Jordan Sulpho Chemical 4.92 ◆ Middle East Complex 2.60	◆ Central Trade 5.13 ◆ Al-Ra'i 5.36 ◆ Jordan Sulpho Chemical 4.69	◆ Intermediate Industry 5.41 ◆ National Cables 5.04 ◆ Jordan Tobacco & Cigarettes 4.99
%	◆ Petrochemicals Paper Converting 4.48 ◆ Middle East Bank 3.81 ◆ Byoma Investment 3.33	◆ Arab Sea Insurance 5.33 ◆ Byoma Investment 5.17 ◆ Al-Ra'i 4.94	◆ Byoma Investment 5.45 ◆ National Security 5.08 ◆ Mineral Industry 5.00	◆ Jordan Center 5.45 ◆ Industry Resources 5.38 ◆ International Food Industry 5.38
General Price Pointer	151.460	150.030	151.360	151.600
Trade Volume	220706	881676	206362	404159
Stock Volume	267108	518886	227586	472846
Highest Traded Stocks	◆ Industry Resources 34239	◆ Jordan Islamic Bank 456825	◆ Al-Razz 1107459	◆ Middle East Complex 58198

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Syria

Peace with Israel, but not at the cost of Golan

By John Daniszewski

KUNEITRA, Syria—When this city was alive, young men flirted and girls gossiped, shopkeepers prospered and children played pranks, peasants dreamed of independence and struggled to get ahead. Or at least this is the vision of Mohammed Malaz, a Syrian director whose critically acclaimed new film, "Al Leil" (The Night), recounts the Kuneitra that once was.

Nothing is left of that world. Kuneitra today is a museum of destruction, its buildings now in broken concrete shards. They are a monument to Syria's continued grievances with Israel over ownership of the water-rich Golan Heights and a apt symbol of a peace process that seems in rubble.

Of all of Israel's Arab neighbors, Syria's position may be the most demonized and perhaps the least understood. It has been branded a supporter of terrorism, an enemy of peace, an implacable foe of the Jewish state.

But from this side of the border, where Syrians look up at the Israeli army guns that bear down on Damascus itself from the snow-capped heights of Mount Hermon, Syrians see themselves not as aggressors but as victims—powerless to stop the occupation of some of their richest land, relegated to the back bench of the peace process and abandoned by American peace brokers.

Syria has made it clear it is no longer committed to the destruction of Israel. The Syrians' inability to compete militarily with Israel is obvious, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was Damascus' principal arms supplier. Syria needs peace and offers, in return, to put the final stamp on Israel's secure existence in the Middle East.

But before Syria finally will make peace with Israel, it says it must get back what it believes it is due under international law and UN resolutions—the Golan Heights, captured by Israel in 1967.

"Syria insists on its own territories," Information Minister Mohammed Salman said. "Any Syrian official who would give up an inch of land will be classified by history as a traitor."

After all, Egypt—when it made its breakthrough for peace with Israel—got back the Sinai, Syrians will tell you. Why shouldn't Syria get back the Golan? "Their self-esteem as leader of the Arab world requires that they get at least as good a deal as Egypt, a country they regard as their equals. They feel hard done that people don't appreciate their position in the West," said one Western diplomat in Damascus, the capital.

But prospects for that seem slim.

Since the election of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel has taken a hard line on retaining the Golan. Where the Israeli governments of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres were willing to barter the Golan for peace, Netanyahu's government has vowed to keep most if not all of it.

Negotiations have not taken place since a series of bus bombings in Israel last year prompted Israel to suspend talks that had been taking place under American auspices.

In an unusually detailed interview published in January by the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Walid Moualem, the chief Syrian negotiator, could not hide his disappointment. After four years of discussions, good progress was being made in the peace negotiations, he said, until Peres upset everything with his call for early Israeli elections. If not for that, he said, a deal might have been reached by last summer.

For Syria, the most important accomplishment of the aborted negotiations was that Israel agreed to a full withdrawal to the 1967 boundaries, asserted Moualem, who is also Syria's ambassador to Washington.

But if such a promise were made—Israel maintains that Peres government negotiators were talking only hypothetically—it has been negated by the election of Netanyahu, who, unlike his predecessor, deems the Golan "essential to the security of the state."

Syrian President Hafez Assad has demanded the negotiations pick up where they broke off. But Netanyahu insists on a fresh start, and that kind of talk infuriates the Syrians.

The film "Al Leil" recalls Kuneitra before it was ruined in the Israeli occupation of 1967-1974. Moviegoers see it through the eyes of a young man and his mother who return to his now-devastated birthplace. "The director wanted to show that, along with destroying the Golan land, memories and people also were destroyed," said Saad Kasem, editor of Syria's *Arts Magazine*.

On a recent Friday, it was a case of life imitating art. Haitham Daass, 31, decided to show visiting friends the house where he was born. In a country such as Syria, where generations of families are deeply rooted to the same piece of land, such excursions can turn emotional. And, indeed, at his family home, a few hundred yards from the frontier with the Israeli-occupied territories, Daass found himself weeping.

The home that he left while still an infant is nothing but a pile of smashed concrete and twisted steel rods, overgrown with weeds. "They say they want peace for peace," Daass said of the Israelis. "How can we have any relationship with them at the same time that our land is occupied?"

Ever since Egyptian President Anwar Sadat broke Arab unity and made a separate peace with Israel in 1979, Assad has struggled to maintain a united front to wrest a comprehensive peace settlement that would require Israel to surrender Arab lands conquered in 1967.

Assad's biographer, Patrick Seale, says the Syrian leader's guiding aim was to keep Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians from striking separate deals that would weaken Syria's cause. To his supporters, Assad's stances were consistent and principled. Detractors, however, say Assad has been stubborn and inflexible.

He did, finally, agree to the US-sponsored Madrid Conference in 1991, which promised a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement based on the principle of "land for peace." After Madrid, Jordan and Israel reached peace. And while the progress toward peace has been fitful between Israel and the Palestinians, the stall in the negotiations between Jerusalem and Damascus has helped make a "fin-de-regime" gloom in Syria.

No one knows how much time Assad has to resolve the issue. In fact, the biggest diplomatic guessing game in town is about the health of the 67-year-old leader, and what happens when he goes.

Portraits of Assad are everywhere in Syria, and many bear the inscription, "Our leader forever." But he has been gaunt and gray for years, had heart troubles in the early 1980s and dropped from view in early January, with the government later announcing he had undergone prostate surgery.

But at a February news conference, he appeared relatively fit and in control. And Syrian officials go out of their way to assure visitors of Assad's good health and to dismiss rumors that a question of succession is imminent.

Since Basel, Assad's oldest son and heir apparent, died in an automobile accident three years ago, much speculation has focused on the Syrian leader's second son, Beshar, 32, as a possible successor. An ophthalmology student in Britain when his brother died, he was brought home and sent to tank commander school and is said to be building his own network of supporters in Syria.

Diplomats, however, think a more likely successor in the near term would be from among Assad's longtime allies, such as Vice President Abdel-Halim Khaddam or armed forces Chief of Staff Hikmat Shehabi.

It is hard to imagine Syria without Assad, who, as defense minister, seized power in 1970 to end a 25-year cycle of coups and counter-coups that had sapped the country.

Along with his Baathist Arab socialism—a one-party governing system reminiscent of the Soviet model—he imposed order and unity. Although he is a member of the religious Alawite minority and has brutally repressed the Islamic Muslim Brotherhood, Assad has retained his popularity in Syria and across the Arab world, in part because of how he stands up to Israel and because he seems above corruption, diplomats say.

Although there have been signs of easing in recent years, including the freeing of more than 1,200 political prisoners, Syria remains totalitarian. Diplomats say its highest aim, even more than achieving peace, is preserving its grip.

And it may be why Syria is not in a greater hurry to negotiate for peace, one diplomat suggested, saying, "If you have open borders with Israel and no danger of attack, then there should be more democracy here."

Syrians, however, insist that this time it is not they who are slowing things down, but rather the Israelis.

"One of the most wanted dreams of the early Israelis was that Arabs accept the existence of Israel in this area," said Salman, the information minister. "This is the historical moment." ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Yelling at each other: Families on the Golan Heights have long been divided because of the Israeli occupation

Ethiopian Jews see bigotry behind soldiers' suicides

By John Daniszewski

JERUSALEM—When a base doctor last month told Molla Belay to discard three crates of sandwiches that he had just prepared as part of his kitchen duties, the Ethiopian-born Israeli soldier assumed the problem was not in the food but in prejudice here against his dark skin and ancestry, relatives say.

Belay followed orders. He worked all night to remake the sandwiches. But the next day, trembling and barely able to speak, he put his rifle in his mouth and pulled the trigger.

He is one of three Ethiopian-born soldiers in the Israeli army to have committed suicide since January, raising anew concerns about racism in the ranks and in Israeli society.

Besides these incidents, Israelis learned last week that Avi Asemara, another Ethiopian-born soldier, two months ago was thrown out of an army clinic by a major who told subordinates to post a sign saying, "No *kushis* (blacks) allowed."

"I went to my room and cried for an hour and a half," said the humiliated soldier. The major got an official reprimand; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, outraged, invited Asemara for a meeting. The parliament's *immigration committee* held a hearing on the incident.

Ethiopian Jews came to Israel in two spectacular airlifts in 1984 and 1991. They now number about 60,000 in a Jewish population of 4.5 million. Initially welcomed as long-lost kin, some Ethiopians complain they never have been fully accepted as Jews and fellow citizens in Israel.

Some private schools and kindergartens have refused to accept Ethiopians. Israeli blood banks for years threw out blood donated by the immigrants from North Africa, fearing that they carried AIDS. Poverty runs high among the Ethiopian minority, with many still in the cramped trailer parks provided by the government when they first arrived. And in the military, an institution many Israelis idealize as the melting pot and leveler of society, some Ethiopians say they have been taunted and stigmatized by officers and fellow recruits.

"Every morning when I get to the base, six soldiers are waiting for me who clap their hands and yell: The kushi is here!" recruit Alene Tamene, 22, told his niece the day before his March 24 suicide, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Belay, 24, had just agreed to take charge of arrangements for a brother's wedding and had only five months left before getting out of the army, said Molla Mengistu, an older cousin who noted, "Everything in his family was so good. His future was so bright."

Gentle and reticent, often burdened with feelings of inferiority because of their rural upbringing and lack of education, Ethiopians often do not speak up for themselves, said Mengistu, an adviser to the health ministry. "Because they are so innocent, because they don't want to disturb the army, they kill themselves instead," he said.

Leaders in the Ethiopian community say 20 soldiers with ancestry in their homeland have committed suicide in the past three years. The army says the number is half that, and insists that most were due to factors unrelated to racism.

"I think there is no other place outside the army where Ethiopian immigrants are so accepted, so respected," said Brig. Gen. Oded Ben-Ami, an army spokesman. Exceptions occur, he conceded, "but the army knows how to deal with these."

But Adisu Massala, the first Ethiopian-born member of the Knesset, or parliament, sees "a very deep problem." He says the 1,750 Ethiopian-born Israelis in uniform make up only 0.4 percent of the military force but have accounted for one-third of the army's suicides in recent years. While he agrees that racism is the exception, it exists and must be dealt with.

Shlomo Mula, chairman of the Umbrella Organization of Ethiopian Immigrants, said the army could start improving by cracking down on racist language. "We came here to be Israelis and to integrate into the Israeli society. We did not come from jungle," Mula says. "We came here as Jews." ■

LA Time-Washington Post News Service



Pvt Avi Afermare is just one of the many Ethiopian soldiers that Prime Minister Netanyahu has been trying to comfort against racism in the Israeli army.

A bitter taste of the peace process

By Roula Khalaf

IT WAS while eating *ma'mul*, the Easter pastry my mother sent from Beirut, with its blend of rich nuts, and taste resemblance to a pecan tart, that the awkward subject of Middle East peace arose.

Ma'mul means something close to "confection", so there is not much mystery, but it is definitely messy and only the most gifted individual can eat one without being sprinkled with powdered sugar.

The pistachio filling was rolling around in my mouth when suddenly, courtesy of the television, we were sharing the room in London with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister. At that moment, when I was trying to concentrate on the pastry, I realized that the world was changing, the Arab world, I mean.

Very casually, almost as though she was suggesting that there was too much sugar coating on the *ma'mul*, or that she preferred date filling to pistachio, my friend, a very close friend, suggested that Netanyahu needed 10 bombs in Tel Aviv, not one, to understand how Arabs felt.

My friend is Palestinian, but I never figured her for a supporter of radical groups, such as Hamas, the Islamist movement opposed to peace. She certainly is not and that is what shocked me.

An eccentric painter who has spent the last 20 years in London, she was considered extreme only in her relative moderation. She surprised many around her by warmly embracing a Jewish son-in-law.

Fifteen years ago, few Arabs would have been outraged by my friend's comment.

Violence was then the vocabulary of the day. Today, even among some of those who were part of a Palestinian 'terrorist organization', violence is seen as futile and counter-productive. Nothing that happens in the Middle East is supposed to justify it.

Yet it was telling that my friend's remark did not elicit protest from the group.

No one challenged her remark, or even stopped to discuss it. We kept on watching television and eating *ma'mul*.

Only later did I begin to think seriously about what was behind her embrace of extremism.

It made me realize that when Arabs see Benjamin Netanyahu on television, their reaction is very different from that of a western audience.

His American accent, his reasonableness, his careful choice of words and his criticism of terrorism who can argue with a condemnation of terrorism, and the killing of the innocent?

Television seems a strange medium when you think about how different audiences react so strongly to the same image, the same words.

To my friends, Netanyahu was diverting attention from the root cause of the violence: the decision to build a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem. For them, his words were provocative and a sign that what is called "the peace process" was falling apart.

I was surprised by the "10 bombs" comment, yet it fits with what Ghassan Salame, a Lebanese and professor at L'Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris, calls the radicalization of the new middle class in the Arab world.

Salame says he is worried because Netanyahu's policies are nurturing anti-Israeli feelings far beyond the group of radical Islamists long opposed to peace.

He also says some of the most recent attacks on Israeli targets in the strip of southern Lebanon occupied by Israel have been carried out not only by the pro-Iranian Hizbollah, but also by Amal, the moderate Shia movement. Then there is the Jordanian soldier who last month killed seven Israeli schoolgirls.

His Majesty King Hussein was so outraged that he went to Israel to visit the parents of the dead girls. At home, however, lawyers were said to be rushing to defend the soldier. And, instead of offering outrage, a Libyan donated $56,000 to the soldier's family, and a Kuwaiti businessman offered another $10,000.

Netanyahu leads a hunt for clues as to whether Yassir Arafat, the Palestinian leader, bears direct responsibility for the violence. But Arabs have moved on, the issue has no relevance at all to them. They are pondering the loss of all hope for peace, the loss of US credibility in the Arab world, and showing a gradual return to the political justification for violence.

In the Arab world, the collapse of peace has reached a point where the references to Netanyahu in the Arab press are so insulting I hesitate to quote them.

This is Jihad Al Khazen writing, the editor of *Al Hayat*, probably the Arab world's most respected daily paper. Al Khazen refers to Netanyahu's "hatred, racism, lies and arrogance."

After Arab foreign ministers agreed to freeze normalisation with Israel last week, al Khazen suggested an economic boycott of the US. "No one has ever died of hunger because they didn't deal with the US, but how many have died dealing with it?" he asks.

So it has taken very little time for Arabs to revert to the anti-Israeli feelings they harbored for decades and to revive their anti-US feelings. I sometimes forget what it was like before the start of what we refer to as the peace process in 1991. ■

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Calling on all charities

THE ESTEEMED ex-UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali and his wife Leah, recently returned from their brazing ordeal in the jungles of New York City, have held an exclusive garage sale in their Nile-view penthouse apartment in Cairo, Egypt.

On sale were the knickknacks and tax-free gifts they received during their five years at the worlds top posting. Invited buyers said the sale netted the couple over L.E. 80,000. It is said they needed to sell the objects because they are vacating the apartment to hopefully take up leadership in Paris of the Francophonie Grouping, a posting bequeathed Boutros to console him for his mauling at the hands of the lioness Albright.

Now, people are waiting to see which of Cairos many needy charities will receive the proceeds of this noble humanitarian event. ■

The Egyptian Gazette



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Mandela, the politician

By Anthony Lewis

WHEN I began visiting South Africa 30 years ago, it was a police state that enforced official racism with a mad logic.

Government employees classified people as white or colored (mixed race) by testing the curl in their hair. Hundreds of thousands of blacks were arrested every year for being in a "white area" without the right pass. Sex across color lines was a crime. A teenage boy was sentenced to five years in prison under the Terrorism Act for writing an anti-white poem and "publishing" it by showing it to his girlfriend.

I thought then, and on many later visits, that South Africa was the most fascinating country on earth. There were exceptional human beings—bishops and writers and lawyers and political thinkers—whose struggle against the system seemed to deepen their characters.

To revisit the country now is a dazzling experience. The old sense of entering a vast prison is gone. There are no restraints on what political creed one may espouse. No one is "banned" or held in detention without trial.

Life in South Africa is a human kaleidoscope of colors: in shops and business offices and not least in Parliament, that former bastion of whiteness. And at the center, where for two generations stern Afrikaner leaders enforced the ideology of racial separation, stands the benign, all-embracing figure who brought about the peaceful transformation, President Nelson Mandela.

Mandela is probably the most widely known political leader in the world, and without doubt the most revered. In an age of ethnic, religious and racial conflicts, societies of a very different character and history wish they had someone of his unifying qualities and unassailable standing: I have heard that from, among others, Israelis and Palestinians.

Yet in profound respects Mandela remains a mystery. What exactly is the magic of his leadership, the means by which he persuades diverse people in what was a riven country to join with him? What enabled him to survive 27 years in prison without disabling bitterness? What makes him Mandela?

The South African drama continues, the fascination of its central character undiminished. Now Mandela is coming under criticism for his government's performance: people are asking whether the qualities that enabled him to lead the country peacefully to freedom are right for the fretful business of governing. So I found on a visit last month to explore the Mandela mystery.

I talked with Mandela in the presidential residence outside Cape Town. The interview took place at 7 in the morning, in an alcove looking out across beautiful lawns and trees down the hill toward Rondebosch, a suburb that is the home of the University of Cape Town. The president came down after having breakfast in his room upstairs. No security men were in sight until an hour later.

What lessons, I asked, did he think the South African story had for Bosnia and other conflicted societies? "It would be presumptuous of me to lecture" Bosnian leaders, he answered. But then he added: "They thought through their blood and not through their brains. In countries where innocent people are dying, the leaders are following their blood rather than their brains."

It was a rare piece of self-revelation, I thought. The world sees Nelson Mandela as a man of extraordinary magnanimity, eschewing revenge for the cruelties of apartheid, reaching out to enemies: the nearest thing politics has to a saint.

True, but not the whole truth. When you talk to those who know him best, you come to understand that Mandela is anything but benign. He is a map of powerful emotions, but even more powerful discipline. If he is saintly, he is saintly for a purpose. Through 27 years of prison and now seven of public leadership, he has disciplined himself to suppress his feelings: to think with his brains and not his blood.

"He has a much keener sense of power than appears in that benign image," an official close to him said. "He has a purpose even in gestures of reconciliation." As an example, the official described what happened at the rugby World Cup final, played in Johannesburg in 1995.

Rugby has been a sport for whites, especially Afrikaners. Hence blacks scorned South Africa's Springbok rugby team. Before the World Cup matches, Mandela urged blacks to support the national team.

When I asked him about it, he laughed and said he had worn a Springbok cap to black political meetings. "I told them, 'We wish our boys success,'" he said, "and they would clap politely—not so enthusiastically."

Against the odds, South Africa made it into the final, against New Zealand. Mandela went to the match and astonished the Springboks by appearing in their locker room before it started, wearing the No. 6 green jersey of their captain and wishing them luck. In a great upset, the Springboks won, 15-12. ("It almost shattered my nerves because of tension," Mandela said when I interviewed him, "I'm still recovering.")

When the president walked out on the field to present the trophy, still wearing the green jersey, the Afrikaner crowd broke into a chant: "Nelson, Nelson, Nelson."

A great emotional moment. But it was more than that. The official who told me about it said: "It had a devastating effect on the far-right white groups, the people who had refused to vote in 1994 or to recognize the new constitution, saying, 'It's not our country.' The groups simply disintegrated. Their people stopped using the symbols of the past, the old flag, the songs. Mandela became the symbol of the whole country."

Symbols matter in the politics of any society, any culture, and Mandela is a master of them. That is one key to his leadership. There is a calculating aspect to what he does, of course: the sense of power that his official mentioned. But he puts so much into a gesture that people accept its good faith. He did not just casually support the rugby Springboks; he touted them to black audiences, he wore the jersey, he went to the locker room, he visibly cared.

To carry out the Mandela theme of reconciliation, not revenge, his new government as one of its first acts set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission with power to grant amnesty to individuals in return for full confession of a political crime. When I talked with the president, the commission had just received amnesty applications from five former policemen involved in what was probably the single most notorious apartheid killing: the murder of Steve Biko, the young Black Consciousness movement leader who died of brain damage while he was in jail in 1977.

At the time, under oath, the police denied responsibility for his death. Now they said they had killed him inadvertently. The extent and truth of their confessions must be tested at hearings where in other cases, the details were so gruesome that the commission chairman, retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu, put his head down on the table and wept.

I asked the president whether the public would continue to support the policy of amnesty as the horrifying truth of what happened to Steve Biko and others came out. "In fact," he answered, "some of the relatives of the victims have said, 'We don't want revenge, but we want to know what happened to our beloveds.' And that is an indication. If a person who has actually suffered can say that, then you know people understand that you can't build a united nation on the basis of revenge."

It was not easy for Mandela to make his view prevail, as the romance about his person may lead some to think. He had to fight for his pragmatism over many years. I talked with half a dozen alumni of Robben Island, and I learned something that surprised me. There were deep divisions among the prisoners, not only political but personal, even among ANC members.

Relations were tense in prison, I was told, between Mandela and Govan Mbeki, a senior ANC colleague and a leading figure in the Communist Party. Mbeki was critical of Mandela's good relations with what he called right-wing elements. They included Buthelezi and some tribal chiefs whom Mandela, who was from a Xhosa chief's family, acknowledged as leaders of a kind.

However sharp the dispute with Mbeki, Mandela did not visit it on the next generation. He has made Govan's son, Thabo Mbeki, the deputy president and his heir apparent. As for Communism, the odd fact is that when apartheid fell, the Communist leaders Joe Slovo and Chris Hani played a crucial part in winning acceptance of the compromises necessary for a peaceful transition.

Many people told me that Mandela does not like what he considers ad hominem attacks or confrontations. One said: "With all the warm things he does, inside he can be hard. He has a terrible grudge against anyone who has crossed him—once you've lost favor with him, he never lets go. That's the mistake that Winnie made: thinking he would forever be at her beck and call. She will never get close to him again, because he has finally taken the turn."

As to Winnie Mandela, it must be added that he did not move immediately for a divorce when he understood that she would not live with him as a wife. He waited until her trial for kidnapping was over, lest their public separation disadvantage her. And his lawyer, George Bizos, represented her. Magnanimity—but it could also be said that the respectful way he dealt with her and the regret with which he announced the divorce minimized the possibility of antagonizing her young supporters in the ANC.

In politics, it was hard for some of the prisoners to accept the idea of negotiating with the apartheid regime. "I had to sit down with my colleagues," Mandela told me, "and say, 'Let us talk with our enemies. Let us suppress our feelings.'" That is what happened after 1990.

In his character and his place in his country's history, Mandela brings to mind George Washington. Of course they are worlds apart, in time and culture. But Washington's biographers, too, describe him as a man of strong emotions who suppressed them in the interest of creating a nation. His disciplined leadership held the quarreling colonies together in war and kept such strong-minded political antagonists as Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton together in his Cabinet.

"There is in the life of a country but one such person: we are just lucky that he came along at this time." That was said to me of Mandela by his lawyer, George Bizos. It sounds like the standard appraisal of Washington. The face that Washington presented to the world was not Mandela's disarming smile but an austere formality. But the two seem similar in the controlled personalities that made them the irreplaceable fathers of their countries.

The question emerging in South Africa is whether the Great Reconciler is also a great president. In Washington's day there was world enough and time. In Mandela's, South Africans, like everyone else, have to compete pell-mell in a world economy. A fast-growing population suffers from unemployment that may be as high as 40 percent, a grotesquely unequal distribution of wealth, appalling crime. Voices are beginning to be heard complaining about Mandela's record on those and other problems.

"The young are fed up," a prominent black figure told me, "with 400,000 coming on the job market every year and few jobs. They think this old man has been too much of a moderate, too reconciliatory, too compromising."

Beyond these specific areas of doubt about the Mandela government's performance, there is criticism from all quarters about the way it governs. The complaint is that the president is too autocratic, too loyal to failed Cabinet ministers who go into a defensive crouch when their mistakes are exposed.

Finally, among the felt doubts about Mandela as president, there is a concern that he has carried his emphasis on unity too far, to the point of dampening the criticism that characterizes democracy.

To me, such criticisms are overshadowed—overwhelmed—by his achievements in the last three years.

I find South Africans today less resentful, less guilty, less prickly about race than many Americans. The submissiveness of some blacks is fading along with white lordliness. Young black lawyers call senior white colleagues by their first names: a social revolution.

But it is the acceptance of a human rights culture that struck me most powerfully on this visit. Law used to be an instrument of oppression. It dictated where you could live, whom you could marry, what you could read. The masters of that system rejected all demands for legal protection of individual rights, and many feared that when change came the new masters would be as unrelenting toward the old.

What, then, is the source of Nelson Mandela's leadership? The friends I have quoted mentioned his discipline, his mastery of symbols, his single-minded purpose, his magnanimity, his patience, his realism, his sense of power.

Patrick Lekota is a younger man who met Mandela on Robben Island and became an ANC supporter there. He has just been made chairman of the new upper house of Parliament, the National Council of Provinces. When I asked him, he listed these qualities:

"First of all, consistency. I cannot think of a day when he seemed to flag in his commitment to the struggle for freedom or even for better prison conditions. His stamina, to pursue an issue right to the end. There's a certain deliberateness. If you are deliberate in taking the risks of a certain course of action, then nothing can shock you because you've already come to terms with the possibility. And he is at peace with himself."

Toward the end of the interview, I asked the president how he would like to be remembered. I mentioned Jefferson's tombstone, which by his choice says nothing of his having been president. Laughing, Mandela said, "Well, that would be very egotistic of me, to say how I would like to be remembered. I'd leave that entirely to South Africans."

But he said that he had "reached the stage of planning my death." Then, in a soft voice, he added, "I would just like a simple stone on which is written, 'Mandela.'" ■

(Anthony Lewis is a columnist for The New York Times.)



The ever popular! Mandela with the crowds

Finally, among the felt doubts about Mandela as president, there is a concern that he has carried his emphasis on unity too far, to the point of dampening the criticism that characterizes democracy.

Mao's tomb closes amid rumors he won't be back



By Rone Tempest

BEIJING—The massive stone mausoleum containing the preserved body of Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung closed this week for repairs that officials said will take at least eight months. But will it reopen? And if so, will it be moved from its dominant position in Tiananmen Square?

The committee responsible for the mausoleum—where Mao's flag-draped body has rested in a crystal sarcophagus since 1977—insists that the refurbished tomb will reopen early next year.

Tuesday, the last day the mausoleum was open to the public, many parts of the building were boarded up and the sound of pounding hammers echoed through the grimy antechambers.

But as the cultist fervor of the Mao era recedes in a country that is now run more by committee than by charisma, some have suggested that it might be a good time to make a symbolic break with China's troubled revolutionary past. Rumors abound that the rehabilitation is really a removal.

"It would be a good thing if it closed forever," said Fei Wangxia, 30, a Shanghai real estate agent. "It would mean that the feudal thing is vanishing and that China is really progressing."

There was widespread opposition to construction of the tomb when first proposed after Mao's death in 1976. Mao himself had asked to be cremated and had signed a 1956 "no embalming" pledge circulated among the leaders.

Deng Xiaoping, his eventual successor, made no secret of his disdain for the hulking tomb at the center of China's most sacred square—which, in the dynastic age, was also considered the epicenter of all human life on Earth. The tomb sits on an axis that radiates from the Forbidden City. It blocks the "qi"—or spirit—that extends in a line from the ancient home of emperors through a series of southern gates into the heart of China.

Significantly, following his wishes, Deng's body was cremated after his Feb. 19 death and his ashes were scattered at sea.

The official explanation for the closing of Mao's tomb was that the building badly needed repair, what with more than 110 million people having come to see the chairman's corpse.

"We needed to do some renovation on the interior," said a Mao Memorial Committee spokesman. He responded haughtily to suggestions that Mao's body might be moved, possibly to his hometown of Shaoshan in Hunan province, where a villager has built another Mao mausoleum complete with an empty crypt. "Move it? Who said so? These are just wild rumors," the official said.

But in the days leading to the 1 April closing, tens of thousands of Chinese flocked to the capital to view the body—from which, like a jack-o'-lantern, an eerie orange glow diffuses—of the man who led China's revolution but whose rule was also marked by political purges, famine of unimaginable horror and the terrible 10-year Cultural Revolution.

On 31 March, more than 10,000 Chinese stood in line at the mausoleum. Outside, the atmosphere was one of a temple fair. In shops on the south side of the tomb, merchants hawked an assortment of Maoist iconography, including Mao Memorial Hall brand cigarettes, toys, sport shoes, zodiac jewelry, luggage, electric razors, statues of Buddha, processed food and cold Coca-Cola.

While similar stalls at other tourist attractions across China are rented out to vendors, all the tombside merchants belonged to the Mao Memorial Hall work unit. One 45-year-old woman, asked what she would do in the time that the building was closed, said simply: "Go home and wait for it to reopen." ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Winding ways of terrorism could be related to political fray in Turkey

By Lucy Komisar

LAST NOVEMBER a truck crashed into a Mercedes-Benz in Susurluk, 90 miles south of Istanbul, and killed three Turkish passengers: a fugitive heroin smuggler and hitman, a former high-ranking police officer and a former "Miss Cinema."

The lone survivor was a right-wing member of parliament.

In the car's trunk, police found a forged passport, police identification papers, ammunition, silencers and machine guns.

Abdullah Catli, the fugitive heroin smuggler, had escaped from a Swiss prison. The dead beauty queen, Gonca Uz, was his girlfriend.

The police officer was Huseyin Kocadag, head of a Turkish police academy and a former Istanbul deputy police chief who reportedly organized hit squads in the southeast whose missions are to kill Kurdish guerrillas and their supporters.

The survivor, Sedat Bucak, a member of parliament from Turkey's conservative True Path Party, is reportedly in charge of 2,000 Kurdish mercenaries paid by the government to fight Kurdish rebels.

The car crash has created a sensation in Turkey and has led parliament to hold hearings on the ties linking the True Path Party, the police and thugs such as Catli. Newspapers in Turkey are making connections between what they are calling the "state gang" and a secret paramilitary force that for decades has attacked members of the left.

But as Turkish investigators dig they may come across one more hidden connection: The United States set up that secret paramilitary force at the height of the Cold War.

In the 1950s the United States was concerned that the Soviet Union would conquer much of Western Europe. The CIA and the Pentagon came up with a plan to establish secret resistance groups within various Western European countries that would fight against the predicted Soviet occupation.

These groups were called "stay-behind" organizations—little cells of paramilitary units that would take on the Soviets behind enemy lines. By now Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Greece, Italy and Germany have all acknowledged that they participated in the covert network.

The United States funded these stay-behind groups for decades. Even though there was no Soviet occupation, some of the groups did take up arms—against left-wing dissidents in their own countries.

Some descendants of these groups are still at it, especially in Turkey. Catli was one of those.

"The accident unveiled the dark liaisons within the state," former Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit told the Turkish parliament last December. Now leader of a small opposition social-democratic party, Ecevit knows a lot about those liaisons.

He first told me about them—and the American connection—back in 1990, when I interviewed him in his Ankara office, as he sat in a soft, brown chair sipping a cherry drink.

Ecevit is a genial, 71-year-old man with a high forehead, deep-set eyes, a beakish nose, curly black hair and a moustache. The son of a doctor and a painter, Ecevit is an intellectual and a poet who has translated some of the verses of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. He graduated from the American-run Robert College in Turkey and lived in the United States as a student and journalist. He once led his country's major Social Democratic party; there was a split, and he now heads the smaller of the two.

Ecevit became prime minister in 1973. He told me he was startled the next year when the Turkish military high command requested money from the prime minister's secret fund to pay for a new headquarters for a so-called Department of Special Warfare.

It was Gen. Semih Sancar, Turkey's army commander, who told him about this department. He said the Americans had funded it initially, but now they were allegedly pulling out.

Ecevit says Sancar advised him not to look too closely into the matter. But when Ecevit did investigate, he found no such organization in the state budget.

"There are a certain number of volunteer patriots whose names are kept secret and are engaged for life in this special department," a military briefer at one point said. "They have hidden arms caches in various parts of the country."

At the time Ecevit worried that these so-called lifetime patriots might have a hard-right slant and endeavor to use their weapons to advance their ideological goals. But he felt he was in no position to deny them funds.

Ecevit's political party was the largest, but it had won only a third of the votes. He was running a shaky coalition government. He decided to release the funds the military wanted and, he says, he never discussed the matter with the United States.

But the US government surely knew about it. It set up the secret stay-behind organization and funded it for more than two decades.

Working out of the joint US military aid team headquarters, the unit was known first as the tactical mobilization group and then the special warfare department. In 1971, after a military coup, it was dubbed the counterguerrilla force and turned into an instrument of terror against the left.

Ugur Mumcu, a Turkish journalist who was arrested shortly after the '71 coup, wrote later that he was tortured by men who told him: "We are the counterguerrillas. Even the president of the republic cannot touch us."

Mumcu, who continued to report on the subject in the daily *Cumhuriyet*, telling of the counterguerrilla force and about the existence of right-wing drug gangs connected to the government, was killed by a car bomb in 1993.

By now confirmation of the counterguerrilla force's existence has come from the highest sources.

Former Turkish army chief of staff, Gen. Kennan Evren, who led a 1980 coup, wrote in his memoirs that Suleyman Demirel, now president and in the late 1970s prime minister, asked that Turkey's special-warfare department be used to combat terrorism. Evren said he refused, but that Demirel insisted, pointing out that the counterguerrillas had been used in 1971 against subversives.



A bus bombing: It is feared that this could continue in today's Turkey

Evren acknowledged that the special-warfare department was involved in clandestine activities, citing the murder of nine left-wing militants at Kizildere in northern Turkey in 1972. He also reported that civilians in the paramilitary organization run by the department may have been involved in terrorist incidents in the 1970s without his knowledge.

One terrorist incident the stay-behind group may have been involved in was on May Day, 1977, when Turkey's major trade-union confederation organized a rally that brought several hundred thousand people to Istanbul's main Taksim Square. As the sun was setting, snipers on surrounding buildings started firing at the speakers' platform. The crowd panicked: 38 were killed; hundreds were injured. The shooting lasted for 20 minutes. Several thousand police at the scene did nothing.

Ecevit, who was not holding office at the time, went to see President Fahri Koruturk and told him he thought the counterguerrilla force might have carried out the massacre.

"Give me a written statement," Koruturk answered. He relayed Ecevit's fears to Prime Minister Demirel. Ecevit recalled, but nothing came of it.

When he ran for prime minister in late 1977, Ecevit denounced the counterguerrillas. As prime minister, he says, he told Evren, "During the Kizildere incidents, the special-warfare section is said to have been used. I am worried about this civilian organization. There is no means of knowing or controlling what a young recruit may get up to after 20 years in such an organization."

Evren replied, "There is nothing to worry about. We will deal with it."

So Ecevit blocked a parliamentary debate on the issue. At a news conference he denied the existence of the counterguerrilla group and said his earlier charges were just suppositions.

Signaling his fear of provoking the military, Ecevit said, "We must all be respectful toward the Turkish armed forces and help them in the realization of their desire to remain out of politics."

Once when Ecevit was touring the country, a general in eastern Turkey gave a dinner in his honor. When Ecevit learned he had worked in the special-warfare department, he told the general, "I have deep suspicions about the civilian extension of that department."

But, he reports, the general assured him, "The civilians work very honestly, very faithfully. There is nothing to be afraid of."

Ecevit told him, "Simply as a hypothesis it's quite possible, general, that one of those lifetime patriots might at some future date become the party chief of the Nationalist Action Party, which is involved in right-wing terrorism in this town."

"Yes," the general told him. "This is the case, but they are very nice men."

By the late 1970s, violence between the left and right threatened Turkey's stability. The chief violent group on the right was the neofascist Grey Wolves, the militant arm of the right-wing Nationalist Action Party headed by Alparslan Turkes, a former colonel and a leader of the 1960 military coup.

Catli, the dead heroin trafficker, was a leader of the Grey Wolves at the time he was found guilty in absentia of organizing the 1978 murders of seven student members of the Turkish Labor Party.

After the explosive car crash, Turkes admitted that Catli had worked clandestinely for the military and the Turkish police—that he had worked "in the framework of a secret service member working for the good of the state."

A former Turkish foreign-ministry adviser and the head of the intelligence anti-terror unit also told officials conducting the current parliamentary inquiry that Catli worked for Turkish intelligence.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, a leader of the conservative True Path Party, praised Catli after the crash: "Those who fire bullets or suffer their wounds in the name of this country, this nation and this state will always be respectfully remembered by us."

But the violence Catli was involved in during the late 1970s helped set the stage for the 1980 military coup, which the generals said was needed to save the country from anarchy.

After the 1980 coup, several hundred thousand leftists were jailed for three or four years without trial. Many were tortured. Now the parliamentary commission has called on Evren to testify about charges that terror squads were used routinely by the military junta and participated in roundups of these individuals.

By the mid-1980s the counterguerrillas had a new target: the Kurds. Government security agencies began using paramilitary death squads against the Kurds who started an armed struggle in 1984.

In November 1990, six months after our interview, Ecevit repeated publicly that a clandestine paramilitary force existed in Turkey. Three weeks later, the head of the Turkish Army Operations Department and the commander of the Special Forces issued a statement that there was a special NATO organization in Turkey called the Special Warfare Department, whose mission was to organize resistance in the case of a communist occupation.

They said its "secret member patriots" were not connected to the counterguerrillas. The special NATO organization was, of course, the stay-behind operation the Americans had started.

In 1992 the commander of the Special Warfare Department, Gen. Kemal Yilmaz, said, "The department is still active in security operations against armed members of the PKK (the Kurdish Workers Party) in Turkey's southeastern provinces."

Then too, the US State Department's 1995 human-rights report on Turkey was blunt: "Prominent credible human-rights organizations—Kurdish leaders and local Kurds asserted that the government acquiesces in, or even carries out, the murders of civilians. ... Human-rights groups reported the widespread and credible belief that a counterguerrilla group associated with the security forces had carried out at least some 'mystery killings.'"

The State Department's 1996 report on Turkey did not mention the counterguerrillas, but said that "mystery killings" continued to occur with "disturbing frequency." It also said: "The 1995 recommendations of a parliamentary committee, designed to purge 'illegal formations' within the state which the committee said committed some 'mystery killings,' were not implemented."

The Turkish embassy in Washington said it had no information on these illegal groups.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary commission investigating the Mercedes-Benz crash has recommended prosecuting the lone survivor of the crash, along with 34 others linked to the scandal, including several former police chiefs and officers.

As for Washington's role, the Pentagon would not answer questions I posed as to whether it was still providing funds or other aid to the Special Warfare Department.

One Pentagon historian said, "Oh, you mean the stay-behind organization? That's classified."

It also turns out that Catli, the fugitive who died in the Mercedes-Benz crash, had another astonishing connection: That was to the man who tried to assassinate Pope John Paul II in 1981, Mehmet Ali Agca.

Both were members of the Grey Wolves. Both had worked together in a previous assassination effort.

In 1979 Ali Agca killed a Turkish newspaper editor. When the police arrested Agca, they found a false passport belonging to Catli. Later Catli reportedly helped organize Agca's escape from an Istanbul military prison. Some have suggested Catli was even involved in the attempt to assassinate the pope.

The CIA said the assassination attempt was the work of the Soviets, through their Bulgarian allies. This has never been proven, and it remains that a more plausible case can be made that it was a rightist plot. The Grey Wolves are clearly implicated, and they are directly related to the Turkish counterguerrilla force.

But why would a Turkish rightist squad have an interest in assassinating the pope? The answer may lie with links between the "stay-behind" organizations in various European countries, which all had a stake in blaming terrorism on the left.

Most is known about the Italian group Gladio—Latin for sword—which reportedly worked with the Mafia and neofascists to prevent Italian communists from taking power through insurrection or the vote.

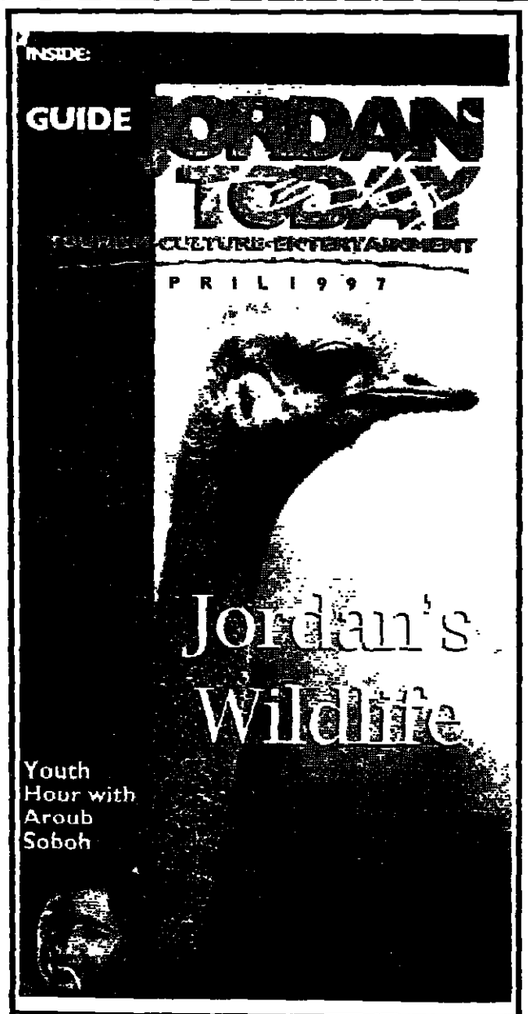
Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti acknowledged the existence of the Gladio in testimony before an Italian parliamentary commission on Aug. 2, 1990. He said Italy had used a "strategy of tension" to undercut the influence of the legal Communist Party.

That strategy was terrorism. The Gladio conducted bombings, and then blamed the bombings on the left. The assassination attempt on the pope may have been part of this strategy of tension.

At the scene of the Mercedes-Benz crash, Turkish investigators found Catli with a fake passport. It was registered to "Mehmet Ozbay," who works as a specialist for the police directorate, a man who was allowed to carry guns.

Indeed, Mehmet Ozbay was an alias—the very same alias Mehmet Ali Agca had on his passport. ■

Lucy Komisar, a New York-based journalist specializing in the Middle East, is working on a book about Turkey and U.S. foreign and human-rights policies in the 1970s and '80s. This article first appeared in The Progressive.



April issue has just come out

For more information call
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Schools

Caught in a struggle for control of Islam

By Charles Clover

THE WOMEN of Tokhtobou mosque in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, pose for a photograph in front of the locked door of their *medresa*, or religious school, where they have been forbidden from studying by the Uzbek government for over a year.

"It's too bad you weren't here yesterday," said Halima, a woman in the group, "there were hundreds of us here demonstrating."

To talk, Halima said we could go inside. "It's too cold here," she decided. The women marched around to the main entrance of the mosque, glowered at a guard who shuffled aside, pretending not to notice as they passed, and headed across the courtyard, up some stairs and through a side entrance to their *medresa*, where they took seats around a long table.

"We have nothing against the government. All we want to do is study the Qoran in peace," Halima said.

But governments around the world have heard this one before. The month-old closure of women's *medresas* around Uzbekistan is the latest in a series of low-intensity skirmishes between the Uzbek state, concerned with controlling Islam, and an Islamic opposition which represents the remnants of a larger movement, the Adolat party based in the Ferghana Valley region, that was crushed several years ago.

While often quirky, the struggle is nevertheless very real. Since 1992, human rights monitor Human Rights Watch/Helsinki has documented the disappearance of three opposition religious leaders, the imprisonment of dozens of Islamic believers on falsified charges, and the closure of three mosques.

"A lot of our leaders are out of jail now," said a member of the secular opposition party Birlik who asked not to be named. "But the Adolat guys, they're still in prison. Even the ones who had three-year sentences are there five years later."

For the moment, though, the conflict is mostly verbal. A week ago, as the women of Tokhtobou mosque congregated in front of their medresa, four carloads of men drove up. The women believe the men to have been members of the SNB, the security service which was formerly the KGB.

"The men got out of their cars and said, 'Hey, what is this, Saudi Arabia? Why do you dress like that?' This is Uzbekistan, you know.' Then they told us to leave," Halima said.

"I'm not afraid to say this, I know who sent the SNB, this was the mufti," said Marquba, who was sitting next to Halima. Some of the women gasped in alarm.

The mufti of Uzbekistan, Mukhtarjan Abdullo Al-Bukhari, is the target of most of the Islamists' rhetoric. He is the state-appointed leader of Islam in Uzbekistan and has the power to close mosques and remove imams, the prayer leaders. It was his order that closed the women's *medresas*, though he claims they are on holiday and will re-open once properly registered.

Outfitted in a white turban and seated in his office in the old city, the elderly Al Bukhari discussed the growth of Islam in his country with the precision of a Soviet factory director who exceeded the plan.

"Since independence, we have increased the number of mosques in Uzbekistan from 80 to 5,000. The number of people going on 4,000 per year. The number of people between 16 and 25 who have memorised the Qoran has risen dramatically as well."

As for the closing of the Tokhtobou *medresa*, "that's an unofficial *medresa*. Their teachers didn't have a deep understanding of Islam."

The school was originally closed over a year ago, in 1995, when the imam of the mosque, Abid Khan Nazarov, was removed from his post, again by the mufti. His removal sparked demonstrations and many arrests.

Since his removal, Nazarov has been evicted from his apartment in Tashkent's old city and placed in a different apartment, from which the government is now trying to evict him. He is currently awaiting the outcome of an appeal.

Nazarov, who looks to be in his early forties, is quiet, direct and educated. Relaxing in a safe house in between appearances at his trial, he conversed in fluent Arabic. "I was removed from my position after the government asked me to inform on my friends. I said I was happy to have discussions, but they wanted me to give names. This I refused to do."

The mufti tells a different story. "Every month, we have a meeting of imams and khatibs in this district. We talk about the Koran and the Shari'ah. We invited him several times, and he didn't come. This is a violation of the Shari'ah," Al Bukhari said.

"One time we issued a fatwa permitting gravestones. He spoke out against it. One other thing. That guy, if he came to religious feasts, he would ask, 'Is this bread hallal or haram?' "The mufti rolls his eyes. "Like it's not hallal. As if we would serve haram bread."

While the government has exerted control by, for instance, closing the women's medresas, the brand of Islam which Nazarov represents is hard to pin down. Women in his entourage are often fully veiled, but he expresses no strong conviction on the subject. "They should do it only if they want to follow the Koran. If they don't, it's okay too," he said. But acquaintances notice that he will not give funeral services for people who were known not to pray, and he will not officiate at weddings where there is music or dancing.

The Uzbek government's concern with controlling Islam may have more to do with the regional implications of the movement, rather than the religious ones.

Nazarov is from the town of Namangan, in the Ferghana valley, where conservative Islam is particularly strong. This was the seat of the Adolat party, whose leader, Khokim Satimov, was arrested in 1993.

The Ferghana valley borders Tajikistan, a country torn apart by fighting between the government and a Moslem fundamentalist opposition, and this is the primary fear of the "We took adequate measures [against Adolat]," said Tolkun Jabbarov, the Hokim of the Namangan region. "If we hadn't, we would have had the same situation as Tajikistan here."



The mosque continues to dominate people's lives in the Central Asian Republics.

The Uzbek government's fears were founded on more than common geography, though. Abdulvali Mirzoev, the former imam of the Andijan mosque also located in the Ferghana Valley, was one of the Uzbek Islamic leaders who disappeared in 1995. He had studied under the same teacher, a legendary Pakistani Qazi, as Sayid Abdullo Nuri, present leader of the Tajik Islamic fundamentalist opposition.

Mirzoev disappeared in August 1995 in the Tashkent airport, along with his assistant, Ramazanbek Matkarimov. They cleared Customs, but never boarded their flight. Days later, the Andijan mosque was closed and turned into a museum.

Pakhir Ibragimov, head of the SNB for the Sabir-Rakhimov region of Tashkent, denied any government involvement in the disappearances. "The SNB doesn't get into fights with religion," he said.

A former acquaintance of Mirzoev, however, thinks the culprit is obvious. "Who else could get to him in an airport? He's definitely not still in the duty free shop." ■

Financial Times Syndication

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Photo exhibit reveal wonders of Al Aqsa mosque

A PHOTOGRAPHIC exhibition about Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem by Said Hisham Nuseibeh is currently on display at the Darat Al Funun.

Featured is a collection of 40 images of the Dome of the Rock, Haram ash-Sharif, and the Old City. This work has just been published by Rizzoli (New York), Thames & Hudson (Great Britain & Middle East), and Albin Michel (France). The photographs are currently exhibiting at the Institute du Monde Arabe in Paris for 3 months as part of the programme, *Printemps Palestinien*.

Nuseibeh is of Palestinian descent who works out of his studio in San Francisco. "For most of this century," says Said, "power and politics have been the most dominant dimensions of the city of Jerusalem. My generation is indeed synonymous with the threat of eradication of my forefathers' culture. My good fortune has been to experience and now share many of the other dimensions art and architecture, history, literature, theology, economy, society, ethnicity, etc."

The photographs are co-sponsored by the Palestine Welfare Association in Geneva, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. Nuseibeh has exhibited once before in Amman in 1986 at the Jordan National Gallery. The photographs, each of limited edition, are in brilliant colour. The exhibit continues till 8 May, 1997. ■

Patricia Chatelain

Angels and walls

By Anca de Maio
Special for The Star

After discovering the beauties of Petra and Wadi Rum last year, Parisian painter **Patricia Chatelain** has returned to Jordan as an artist and not as a simple tourist with the double intention of meeting local artists and introduce herself to the Jordanian public. Through the mediation of the French Cultural Center, Chatelain invited four Jordanian artists to participate in an 'action painting' event, consisting of a collective work trip to Amra Castle, and a display of a selection of her paintings in a solo exhibition in Amman since last Sunday 6 April.

Born in Paris in 1963 but brought up in Martinique from 1973-1980, Chatelain was attracted to the different regions and cultures of the world she came in contact with. Back to the French capital, she expressed, in her early work, her fascination for African dance and music, as revealed to her by the Black community there, still in the flamboyant colors of the Antilles. Basically an interior architect and designer, she chose art to technical work and decided to lead her own way.

Her first visit to Italy in 1990 marked a turning point in her life and her artwork. It is there that she discovered the exquisite primitivism of Etruscan art and the local charms of Rome and Tuscany. After a year of artistic infertility determined by 'a feeling of exhaustion,' the experiences she had undergone in Italy got macerated and sublimated into a new powerful artistic theme: 'angeli primitivi'. "I needed a long gestation period for this new series, so to speak," confessed the artist. "In a way each of my series is linked to a cycle of my life," she continued.

Their first materialization in 1992 was in a small format series of around 30 original engravings on paper and graphite. Primary icons of "duality in unity" or man and woman, Ying and Yang distinct and joined at the same time," Chatelain's archetypal angels represent an essentialised "primitive image free of any cultural frontiers." Although they are bearing an Italian denomination, the French artist's black and white angels are equally Etruscan, African and pre-Columbian. "Six of the whole series are displayed in the current exhibition as venerated universal prototypes of the later color series of 'angeli primitivi.'

Returning to Italy in 1993 and 1995, Chatelain learned the secrets of painting on moist lime from the Italian artist-craftsman **Vicenzo Berneschi**. Moreover she received the inspiration of giving the "angeli" a more realistic regional identities. "I preserved the general theme but I set it within different contexts," explained the artist. "My paintings tell true stories that I witnessed or lived myself in a certain region or country at a certain time," she said. "Each of them is the plastic equivalent of a writer's notes of a moment or scene that marked him," she compared. In such pieces as 'Tuscia' (the ancient name for Tuscany meaning 'all that exists'), 'Notte' (the night), 'Rome' or 'Woman from Africa', Chatelain's approach is oriented from the local towards the universal.

Elongated in an attempt to touch the sky, the hieratic vertical figures of an androgen or pregnant women stand on the ochre-yellow-red hills of Tuscany. She employed an Italian technique of fresco on wood plastered with a mixture of lime and marble powder. Natural pigments are applied on the still moist plaster. After having been smoothed with a special knife, the surface can be touched: feeling its soft cold texture completes the visual perception of the daylight warm colors of the painting.

The Rome mixed media on wood four 'fragments' and one 'whole' combine the theme of 'angeli primitivi' with that of the 'walls,' the key subject of Chatelain's more recent work. Old fresco-like fragments of walls from Rome narrate remote stories about men and women. The time of their adventures has long passed



away, but their legends are still of universal interest. The commenting inscriptions accompanying the almost effaced figures on the same wall fragments are scribbled in an invented imaginary language that could be easily taken for Etruscan writing. "There is a personal meaning I actually give to each scene and text," said the artist, "but it is too intimate to be relevant for other people. On the contrary an illegible writing is open to all readings any anybody can recognize in it his or her own story," she added.

The illusion of time patina left on the fresco is perfect. The first greenish layers of the frescos became visible under the eroded superficial coatings, as it were. Mild colors like light green, ochre, pink and beige are the would-be remainings of an initial vivid palette. "The restored Sixtin Chapel was shocking to everybody, as the epoch real chromatics contrasts so much with what had been considered for a long time "Michelangelo's colors" or fresco colors', commented the artist.

An other variant of Chatelain's 'angeli primitivi' as exemplified by six small 'details' and the biggest painting of the collection entitled 'Acqua', was inspired by her discovery of the amazing underwater universe of the Antilles. The primitive angels dwell in a ultramarine and Turkish blue ocean infused with the melting orange of solar energy.

Chatelain's latest thematic interest, 'the memory of walls', became crystalised at the end of 1995 and developed into an original series of 'Wall Portraits' on paper, cartoon and canvas. "While walking in the streets of Paris, I realized that walls change from year to year," explained the artist. "Exposed to the time, weather, poflution, a wall is not still nature," she stressed. "I am attentive to very specific detail. I store the visual information I do not want to lose by memorizing it or—when I know I cannot work on it right away—by taking notes and even photos," she said. Gloomy and introvert, the gray 'state of mind' of her Parisian walls contrast with the serene acceptance of the red, ochre or green walls from Tuscany, Rome and Venice.

Convinced that intercultural dialogue is one of the best ways of self-discovery, the Parisian artist feels that her new Jordanian experience will have a strong impact on her future artwork. Her minute contemplation of the walls of Amman is the first step of a new project. "I would like to come back to Amman in two years' time with a collection on the walls of the region: Amman and maybe Beirut and Jerusalem," she concluded ■

Summer time at Middle East Hotel

● Middle East Hotel started its preparation for the summer season. The pool is being renovated with the addition of a new food and drinks counter serving fresh and healthy food and drinks. The expected opening in next May. Application from membership is being accepted now.

SCRAPBOOK

By Ahmad Madi

Putting Amman on the stage

I HAVE had the chance to attend three of the plays participating in the Fourth Amman International Theater Festival for Independent Theater Groups which was held between 27 March to 8 April at the Royal Cultural Center.

For me as well as for many thousands of theater lovers in Jordan, the festival was a unique cultural event which provided us with a precious opportunity to witness developments of the Jordanian, Arab and international theater movement.

The event is a result of the determination and tireless efforts of Jordanian stage actors at Al Fawanees Theater Group and the Egyptian El Warsha group. The support of the Greater Amman Municipality, among others, was an important contribution to the cultural movement in Jordan.

Festival director **Nader Imran** does not hide his frustration with the obstacles that faced him and the festival organizers to get the show running for the fourth year in a row. Equally he has showed his determination to continue with this cultural tradition. The RCC is already booked for the fifth festival next year.

The festival offered us an opportunity to see experiments in theater by companies from Sweden, the United States, France, in addition to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Tunis, Bahrain and others. It is this diversity which gave the festival its international flavor. More importantly, the workshops that took place during the event allowed local and Arab talents to brush shoulders with international ones. The spill over effects of such exchange of experiences will be seen on the local stage in the future.

The festival has given us a new view of the Jordanian theater movement. Beyond the commercial attempts that we have seen in the past few years, there is a serious theater movement in Jordan that is vibrant, professional and creative.

There is no doubt that the packed auditoriums of the RCC are an indication that awareness of the theater as a main tributary to the cultural life in Jordan is increasing. The success of this year's festival is a proof that with meager resources and a vision an event such as the theater festival can take place.

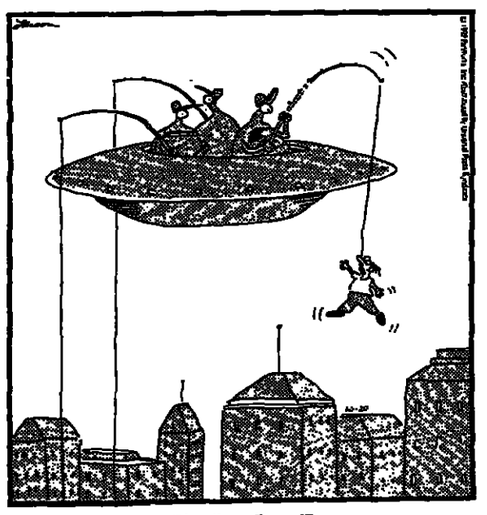
It will be a good thing if banks, public companies and others were to join in supporting events of this sort which help put Amman on the cultural map of the world. ■

THE FAR SIDE

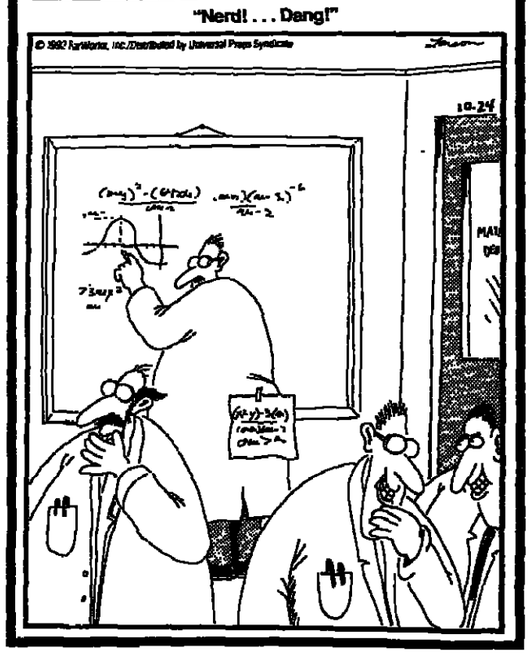
By GARY LARSON



"Tell it again, Gramps! The one about being caught in the shark frenzy off the Great Barrier Reef!"



"Nerd! . . . Dang!"



Abu Shakra introduces CHANEL No. 5 in its new pack

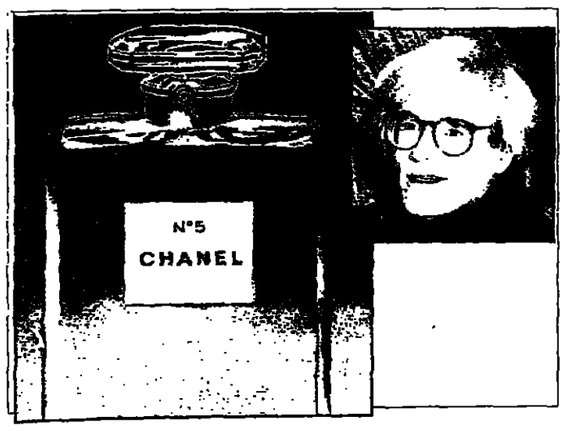
MR RAMI Abu Shakra, general manager of the Abu Shakra Trading Agency introduced CHANEL No. 5., in its new and splendid pack by saying:

As of this month the world will witness the relevance of the legend No. 5 through the works of the legendary artist **Andy Warhol**.

The globe will come to reveal No. 5 by Warhol, the creative and daring artist with his outstanding colourful and progressive abstract expressions.

Once again Channel reasserts its crushing ability of on going norms. CHANEL No. 5 remains as it has been for the past a 75 years the legend of all well reputed perfumes.

CHANEL No. 5 is a perfume being all for excitement created by Warhol's delicate brush to excite women more and more into their own tender femininity.



CHANEL No. 5 in its new colourful pack and graphic designs is on display in all Abu Shakra showrooms and other appointed dealers. Stock is limited and for few weeks only. ■

Terry Fox, Al Amal Cancer Center Run

Raising funds for cancer research

UNDER THE patronage of HM Queen Noor, the Canadian Embassy in Amman and the Amal Cancer Center, and in cooperation with HRH **Prince Ra'ad Bin Zeid**, are organizing the 1997 Terry Fox/Al Amal Center Center Run. It is to be held in Amman on Friday 25 April 1997.

Originally the run was inspired by the dedication and courage of Terry Fox. This young Canadian set out to run across Canada, after he had one leg amputated because of cancer, to increase awareness and raise fund for research. Following his death, a special foundation was created in his name to keep alive the spirit of his dream. The Terry Fox Run is a non-profit, non-commercial run, which has become an annual tradition in the past 15 years, in over 43 countries worldwide.

The route of the run will measure approximately 10 kilometers and participants can either run or walk across the course. This year, with the opening of Al Amal Center approaching, the organizers hope to attract 10,000 people from all ages to take part.

They are planning to encourage students from all ages, their parents, members of professional organizations, clubs and the population at large to participate in the event. They are also counting on sponsors to help provide refreshments and snacks for the runners and walkers.

All funds raised for the run will be donated to the Amal Center and used for research. Al Amal Center is the first comprehensive center for cancer treatment in Jordan and the region. Its services include screening and early detection and treatment (surgery, chemotherapy, physical and psychological rehabilitation), in addition to public awareness and education about cancer prevention and control. The center has begun its gradual operation with the women's screening clinic, stop smoking clinic, healthy diet and weight control clinic and will be in full operation by the end of April 1997.

For more information contact the PR Division of the Amal Cancer Center (tel: 849 387/Fax: 835 868) or Ms Chantal Chastenay at the Canadian Embassy (tel: 666 124 / Fax: 689 227). ■

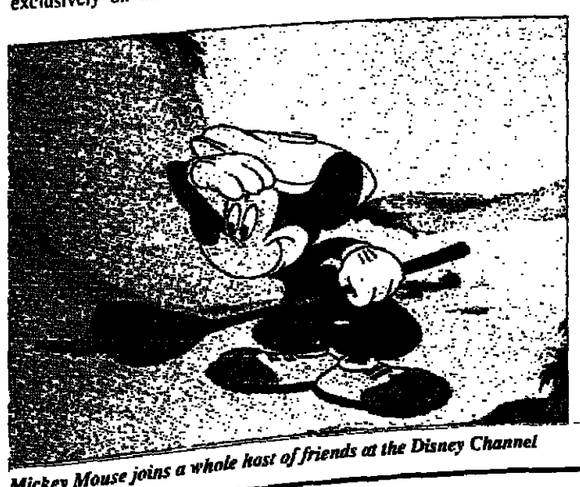
The best in disney on Orbit

DUBAI — A celebration party held at the Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club marked the launch of the Disney Channel—Middle East. Created specifically for families—parents and children—the Channel will broadcast some of the finest family programming ever seen in the region, 24 hours a day, seven days a week exclusively on the Orbit Satellite Television and Radio Network.

With the Creek Golf Clubhouse gardens transformed into a colourful carnival, over 200 families mingled with Baloo and King Louie, two of the most beloved characters from Disney's classic The Jungle Book, while Mickey, Minnie, Donald and Goofy gave excited youngsters the chance of a lifetime as they posed for individual portrait photos.

The big moment came at precisely 8 pm when the guests joined all the characters in counting down the last 10 seconds until the 'switch on' to mark the launch of The Disney Channel—Middle East. At this time, home viewers were able to enjoy the regional TV premiere of the all-time family favourite The Jungle Book.

"As the father of two children, I'm very happy to be here as we launch The Disney Channel—Middle East in the region," commented **Scott Hicks**, managing director of The Disney Channel—Middle East. "I am very proud of the work that has helped create a channel with programming that is not only informative and entertaining, but that is relevant and appropriate for all family members, from young children to adults."



Mickey Mouse joins a whole host of friends at the Disney Channel

Specifically developed for families in the Middle East and North Africa, The Disney Channel—Middle East offers an unparalleled blend of distinctive, originally-produced programmes and quality Disney entertainment. Consistent with Disney Channels elsewhere, The Disney Channel—Middle East offers entertainment for the whole family — pre-school series, animation, teen series, specials, family drama, movies and Disney animated and live action classics as well as new releases.

The Disney Channel—Middle East, available exclusively on the Orbit Satellite Television and Radio Network, can be seen in 23 countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa, from Morocco to Oman. ■



Brotherly Love is a favorite with disney lovers. It tells the escapades of three brothers

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Un pèlerinage sous haute surveillance



L'Arabie saoudite, qui s'apprête à accueillir à partir d'aujourd'hui deux millions de pèlerins à la Mecque (notre photo) pendant une semaine, redoute davantage cette année un éventuel attentat que les habituelles manifestations de pèlerins iraniens, les relations avec Téhéran s'étant améliorées. Les dirigeants iraniens ont multiplié récemment les déclarations bienveillantes à l'égard de Ryad, et n'ont pas appelé les 73.000 pèlerins iraniens attendus cette année à la Mecque à organiser la traditionnelle manifestation «d'exécration des païens». Cette manifestation, au cours de laquelle les pèlerins iraniens conspuent Israël et les Etats-Unis, a dégénéré dans le passé en affrontements avec les forces saoudiennes. En 1987, 400 personnes avaient trouvé la mort. Cette année, après avoir été ébranlé par un attentat américain en juin dernier, le royaume saoudien met les bouchées doubles pour assurer une sécurité sans faille lors du pèlerinage. Ces mesures visent à «dissuader ceux qui veulent profiter de la période du pèlerinage pour introduire de la drogue, s'infiltrer dans le pays ou y mener des tentatives de déstabilisation» a déclaré l'un des responsables saoudiens de la sécurité. L'année passée, les autorités saoudiennes avaient arrêté juste avant le pèlerinage un Saoudien à la frontière jordanienne au volant d'une voiture chargée d'explosifs.

SELON MOI

Le processus démocratique qui a touché presque toutes les institutions de la société civile dans le royaume hachémite a négligé un endroit fondamental de notre société, la mosquée.

La mosquée, lieu fréquenté pour une majorité de Jordaniens, est presque totalement marginalisée du processus de développement. Elle l'est certes depuis des siècles, mais aujourd'hui, la mosquée pourrait servir et contribuer énormément au progrès de la société.

De toutes les institutions du monde arabe et musulman, la mosquée est la plus significative pour les peuples arabes dans leur histoire et dans leur vie quotidienne.

Etant le seul lieu de rassemblement, elle a longtemps servi d'école aux musulmans au début de l'Islam. Et aujourd'hui, elle pourrait continuer à assumer ce rôle, dans le sens où celle-ci deviendrait une institution capable d'éduquer les pratiquants en leur permettant de mieux appréhender leur religion et son évolution.

Au lieu, par exemple, de se contenter de dénoncer dans leurs prêches l'impérialisme et le sionisme, les imams pourraient aborder des problèmes sociaux. La mosquée pourrait devenir un lieu de débat pour discuter de tous les maux dont souffre la société, et notamment sur des thèmes comme la condition de la femme ou les droits de l'Homme.

La mosquée pourrait assumer un rôle éducatif, comme le fait l'église depuis longtemps. Elle pourrait devenir un lieu de séminaire ou de tables-rondes sur certains sujets. Et si des discussions engendrent des conflits, certaines personnes tentant probablement de politiser de tels forums, il est alors possible de limiter ces débats à certains sujets, tels que l'éducation ou la vie sociale.

En agissant ainsi, la Jordanie pourrait devenir une plate-forme pour tous les muftis et les intellectuels désirant débattre de notre histoire contemporaine. Et au lieu de laisser la société être dominée par des gens susceptibles se prétendant religieux et qui ne cessent de crier à l'apostasie ou au blasphème, cette mosquée pourrait tenter de discuter de vrais problèmes sociaux et approfondir ainsi le message de l'Islam.

Mais actuellement, nos mosquées ne sont pas capables d'assumer un tel rôle. Le terrain doit être préparé pour réussir une telle transformation. Pour cela, il faudrait songer à ouvrir les mosquées, par le biais de concours ou d'élections, afin que les meilleurs soient capables de remplir cette tâche. Les responsables ne devraient pas forcement être issus du milieu religieux, et ce concours devrait être ouvert à tous: intellectuels, éducateurs, sociologues....

En fait, la mosquée est le lieu idéal pour combattre le terrorisme intellectuel dont chaque individu, pratiquant ou non-pratiquant, souffre constamment. Et, bien utilisée, la mosquée pourrait alors devenir un nouvel emblème de la démocratie dans les pays arabes.■

Sa'eda Kilani

Palestine

Un processus de guerre

Suite à un blocage du processus de paix, les territoires occupés connaissent depuis trois semaines des affrontements meurtriers entre manifestants palestiniens et policiers israéliens. Et sur le plan diplomatique, les solutions de compromis se font attendre.

«Israël a déclaré *la guerre au processus de paix»* a annoncé Yasser Arafat devant la conférence des pays non alignés qui s'est tenue ces trois derniers jours à New Delhi. C'est la colonisation dans les faubourgs de Jérusalem, à Jebel Abou Ghneim, qui a donné le signal pour une nouvelle flambée de violence dans les territoires palestiniens encore sous occupation. Une nouvelle «petite Intifada» se déroule en effet actuellement.

Ce retour au scénario du passé était prévu par les responsables palestiniens et un certain nombre d'Israéliens, en plus de la quasi-totalité des dirigeants internationaux.

La région toute entière se retrouve à nouveau menacée d'explosion. L'incident qui a vu un soldat jordanien ouvrir le feu sur un bus israélien et tuer sept jeunes filles n'en est qu'une tragique illustration. Et des manifestations de protestation ont lieu un peu partout dans le monde arabe, notamment en Egypte où les étudiants sont descendus dans la rue.

Sur le plan international, l'attitude israélienne est critiquée dans les chancelleries, y compris aux Etats-Unis. Cependant, l'attitude américaine est des plus ambiguës, les Etats-Unis ayant utilisé par deux fois leur droit de veto au Conseil de sécurité pour refuser l'adoption d'une résolution condamnant la politique israélienne.

Pour sortir de l'impasse, la direction palestinienne privilégie pour le moment la diplomatie, avec notamment actuellement une tournée internationale du président Arafat.

Mais combien de temps l'OLP pourra contrôler les réactions de la population palestinienne, ou freiner la progression du mouvement islamiste qui vient en une semaine de remporter des élections importantes au sein du syndicat des ingénieurs palestiniens et à l'Université d'Hébron.

Les portes n'ont jamais été aussi ouvertes, et tous les scénarios sont malheureusement possibles.■

De Gaza, Hassan Balawi



Une «petite Intifada» a repris dans les territoires.

«Il est encore possible de revenir dans le droit chemin»

Dr Zakarya Agha, membre du comité exécutif de l'OLP et membre du comité central du Fatah, se montre encore optimiste pour sauver le processus de paix.

Considérez-vous que le processus de paix soit mort?

Non, je ne crois pas que l'on puisse employer le mot mort. C'est vrai qu'il connaît de graves difficultés à cause du non-respect israélien des accords passés. Mais je crois qu'il est encore possible de revenir dans le droit chemin si la communauté internationale, et surtout les Etats-Unis, font des efforts en ce sens.

A quel moment vous résoudrez vous à délivrer un certificat de décès au processus de paix?

Si Israël continue de violer les accords en faisant fi du principe la terre contre la paix, si nous sentons de façon définitive que les Etats-Unis sont incapables d'infléchir l'attitude israélienne et si nous sentons que la pression internationale n'a aucun effet, cela signifiera que nous sommes en situation d'échec complet.

Quelle alternative vous restera-t-il à ce moment-là?

Bien que la charte des Nations-Unies accorde le droit aux peuples de se défendre par tous les moyens légitimes, y compris le recours à la résistance armée, je crois qu'il est un peu prématuré de poser la question en ces termes. Car une telle éventualité exige des conditions spécifiques, telles qu'un soutien arabe et un consensus international. Je pense qu'il faut uniquement se concentrer sur les possibilités de sauver le processus de paix.

Vous attachez une importance particulière aux Etats-Unis. N'êtes-vous pas déçu de l'attitude la nouvelle administration américaine?

Nous nous attendions à ce que l'administration américaine, dans son deuxième mandat, soit plus juste et moins partiale. Je crois que les récents remaniements l'ont rendue trop proche d'Israël.

Il reste tout de même une lueur d'espoirs, notamment avec le voyage d'Hanane Achraoui à Washington.

En dépit de ce que j'ai avancé sur la partialité des Etats-Unis, il n'en demeure pas moins que les Etats-Unis restent le parrain principal du processus de paix. Il faut donc toujours garder espoir. Et c'est pourquoi Hanane Achraoui a été chargé d'aller expliquer la position palestinienne à Washington.

Qu'attendez-vous des Américains?

Un mécanisme clair amenant les deux parties à respecter le processus de paix initié par Georges Bush sur les bases de la résolution 242.

Benjamin Netanyahou propose d'entamer tout de suite les négociations sur le statut final. Qu'en pensez-vous?

Nous ne somme pas opposés à cela. Celles-ci auraient dû commencer le 27 mars dernier. Mais nous pensons qu'il faut mener les négociations sur le statut final tout en appliquant l'accord intérimaire, ce qui n'est pas le cas de M.Netanyahou.■

Propos recueillis par Hassan Balawi

Jérusalem

L'économie entre en bataille

Amman a accueilli cette semaine «la réunion pour Jérusalem». Une conférence qui avait pour but d'offrir aux Palestiniens les moyens économiques de se défendre contre la politique de colonisation d'Israël.

Après la création à Amman d'un fonds d'investissement pour Al-Quds, Jérusalem en arabe, l'impression prévalant est qu'un pas important a été franchi pour soutenir les Palestiniens de la Ville Sainte, sous occupation israélienne depuis juin 1967.

La situation de ces habitants se détériorent d'année en année à cause de la politique israélienne d'occupation et de colonisation: aucune méthode n'est épargnée pour empêcher les Palestiniens de construire de nouveaux logements. Ils n'ont pas le droit d'investir dans leur ville afin de répondre aux besoins croissants de logements liés au tourisme et à la croissance de la population. Pire encore, les Israéliens procèdent à la confiscation des cartes d'identité des citoyens palestiniens d'Al Quds. Depuis le début de l'année 1996, 4.000 cartes ont été confisquées.

Le comble de cette politique a été atteint le mois dernier avec l'ouverture d'un nouveau chantier, à Jabal Abou Ghneim, sur les hauteurs de Jérusalem-Est. Cette nouvelle colonie devrait comprendre 6500 logements réservés aux Israéliens.

Ce nouveau projet était bien sûr au centre des discussions de la «réunion pour Jérusalem» qui s'est tenue samedi à Amman. Parmi les 200 participants jordaniens et palestiniens se trouvaient notamment Khalil Tafakji, directeur du centre d'études cartographiques de Jérusalem et Fayçal Husseini, responsable du dossier de Jérusalem au sein de l'Autorité nationale palestinienne. Ce dernier a longuement retracé l'histoire du conflit incessant autour de Jérusalem depuis 1967 entre le peuple palestinien et l'occupant israélien. *«Trente ans après cette occupation, l'Israélien reste consterné lorsqu'il voit encore le drapeau palestinien au cœur de la Ville Sainte. Le Palestinien, quant à lui, est très inquiet quand il voit de nouvelles colonies se construire autour»*, a déclaré Fayçal Husseini, qui a clairement expliqué ce qu'il attendait des 200 hommes d'affaires réunis. *«Nous avons les méthodes pour résister, et vous, vous avez les moyens. Aidez-nous à développer Al Quds et à trouver des emplois pour les jeunes»*.



Amman accueillait samedi la «réunion pour Jérusalem».

La réponse n'a pas tardé: les homme d'affaires et les banquiers, dont le président de l'Arab Bank, Abdel Majid Shoman, co-organisateur de cette réunion, ont décidé la création d'un fonds de 100 millions de dollars, le Fonds d'Investissement Commun pour Jérusalem. Cet argent doit servir à financer des projets touristiques, agricoles et commerciaux, ainsi que des projets d'habitation, les besoins de la population palestinienne de Jérusalem étant évalués à 10.000 logements.

Environ 20% de cette somme ont été collectés le jour de la réunion, le reste des actions étant désormais en vente. Et selon Abdel Majid Shoman, ce fonds pourrait rapidement augmenter pour atteindre 1 milliard de dollars.

Pour le juriste palestinien Anis Qassem, il est possible d'un point de vue juridique d'investir à Jérusalem, même si cela représente plus de difficultés qu'ailleurs. L'ambassadeur palestinien à Amman, Omar Khatib, a exprimé le souhait de concrétiser le plus rapidement possible cette volonté d'agir sur le terrain, car selon lui, *«la frénésie de la colonisation et l'expulsion des citoyens s'accélèrent malgré les accords passés entre l'OLP et Israël, et malgré les résolutions de l'Onu qui demandent au gouvernement israélien de renoncer à toute mesure portant atteinte au caractère arabe de Jérusalem-Est et à son statut»*.

Parmi les participants, la satisfaction était grande à l'issue de cette réunion. Mounib Masri, l'un des organisateurs, a rappelé l'expérience de l'«établissement de la coopération» qui a déployé des efforts importants au service du développement en Palestine dans les années 80.

Capital arabe face au capital israélien: la lutte autour d'Al Quds se déroulait jusqu'à présent au niveau politique, militaire et religieux. Aujourd'hui, c'est au tour de l'économie d'entrer en jeu.■

Suleiman Sweiss

Urbanisme

La ville d'Amman effectue son retour aux sources

Un vaste projet d'urbanisation est entrepris depuis maintenant deux ans dans le cœur populaire d'Amman, la basse-ville. Sur le site de Ras-el-Aïn, «le sommet de la source», le bâtiment de la Municipalité du Grand Amman a déjà vu le jour. Il est le premier d'une longue série de constructions à vocation administrative et culturelle.

Situé au centre d'Amman pour symboliser la volonté de la municipalité de la ville de redonner son âme à la ville, un grand projet architectural a été lancé sur le site de Ras-el-Aïn. La Municipalité du Grand Amman (MGA) a initié ce projet en 1995 qui doit permettre le développement conjoint d'activités culturelles et touristiques.

Le choix de Ras-el-Aïn s'imposait, au carrefour des quatre grands quartiers d'Amman. Un emplacement que Saed Camouh, directeur des relations publiques à la MGA, décrit comme *«le cœur culturel et économique dans lequel on retrouve l'histoire moderne et ancienne des citadins. Ce site a souffert pendant de nombreuses années de la négligence de l'urbanisation et n'a pas pu se développer au même rythme que ses environs. D'où l'importance aujourd'hui de sa réorganisation.»*

Le projet de la MGA s'étend sur un site de 14 hectares. Plusieurs bâtiments officiels sont prévus au milieu de jardins, tels que le Conseil de la ville d'Amman. Une mosquée pouvant accueillir jusqu'à 800 fidèles doit aussi sortir de terre dans les prochains mois, ainsi qu'un centre culturel populaire, une bibliothèque, une médiathèque, un musée national et un parc de loisirs qui s'étendra sur 6 hectares.

La première étape de ce projet a été réalisée, et inaugurée le 14 novembre 1996. Il s'agit du bâtiment du Conseil de la ville. Ce bâtiment monumental de quatre étages, d'une surface de 10.000 mètres carrés, contient à la fois des salles d'expositions et les bureaux de la municipalité d'Amman. L'architecte jordanien Jaafar Toaquane, qui l'a conçu en 1995, le décrit ainsi. *«L'effet monumental et majestueux de ce bloc cubique s'inspire de l'authenticité historique et traditionnelle de la région. J'ai utilisé un jeu de symétrie pour la partie officielle du bâtiment, avec une forme cylindrique évoquant la transparence envers le public»*.

Des techniques de construction nouvelles

Ce bâtiment est novateur à la fois dans son architecture et dans sa conception. Les matériaux utilisés et les procédés employés, notamment pour la taille des pierres, diffèrent des réalisations que l'on trouve habituellement en Jordanie. On y trouve notamment une horloge solaire ainsi qu'un para-soleil. Selon Jaafar Toaquane, ce bâtiment *«devrait se situer dans l'esprit de dialogue entre l'autorité locale et le citoyen»*.

Ce nouveau bâtiment a déjà eu l'occasion d'accueillir des manifestations artistiques, notamment à l'occasion de la fin du ramadan. Cette vocation culturelle s'inscrit dans l'ensemble du projet de la MGA.

Tout autour se dresseront en effet bientôt de nombreux espaces culturels. Cette volonté de privilégier la culture se retrouve aussi dans les efforts de la municipalité pour préserver les vestiges omeyades retrouvés sur ce site, ainsi que les traces des premiers citadins de cette ville qui faisait alors partie de l'Emirat transjordanien.



Le site de Ras-el-Aïn avec le bâtiment du Conseil de la ville

Un parcours touristique sera ensuite développé, en faisant référence à l'histoire d'Amman et de ce lieu.

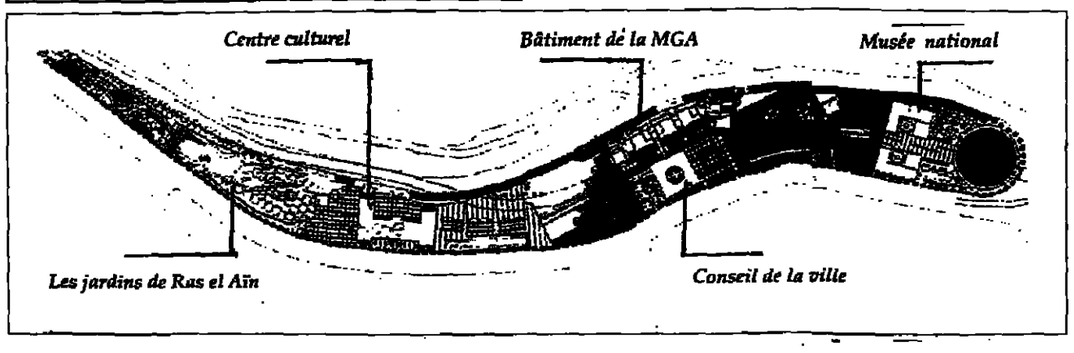
Les visiteurs passeront ainsi de la «voie des ondines» au «sommet de la source» ou à la «chute de la bleue»... Un parcours qui leur permettra de voyager à travers l'Histoire d'Amman tout en se trouvant au cœur moderne de la capitale.■

Chédid Abdallah

Un projet global d'aménagement

La Municipalité du Grand Amman a établi pour les quatre années à venir un programme global de développement de la basse-ville qui comprend notamment les projets suivants:

- de nouvelles voies de communication et un accès plus direct à Ras-el-Aïn, notamment grâce aux travaux d'aménagement du troisième cercle actuellement réalisés
- la création d'espaces verts
- la création de terrains de sports dans la basse-ville
- la sauvegarde d'une vingtaine d'anciennes maisons
- la création d'une liaison entre la citadelle et l'esplanade du théâtre romain, probablement par le biais d'un téléphérique.



Le projet global de Ras el Aïn

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Exposition

Patricia Châtelain, jusqu'au 27 avril au CCCL.

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10 APRIL 1997

Einstein's house a source of controversy

Continued from page 1

...group that includes ...family descendants and ...organizations ranging ...from Jerusalem's Hebrew ...University to the New Je... ...chapter of an anti-...defection league.

Smith said Einstein always loathed the idea that his house might become a tourist attraction and often pleaded for it to be preserved as a place of contemplative ...and research for scholar... ...wish, was honored ... East Germany's com... ...government designated the ...historical land... ...and renovated the ...in the 1979 centen... ...Einstein's birth ...the 40-year exis... ...of the German Democratic Republic. ...the house was ...by that govern... ...Academy of Sci... ...It was reserved pri... ...as a guest house ...prominent physicists. ...After Germany was ...in 1990, the vil... ...the first big ...by wresting ...Einstein's prop... ...the state of ...But since ...has managed ...custody of ...his research ...with the ...heirs. ...behold Ein... ...meaning a ...for ...place to ...special ...It ...room of ...kind of ...fences ...and Ein... ...Princeton ...the ...dwelling ...entry...

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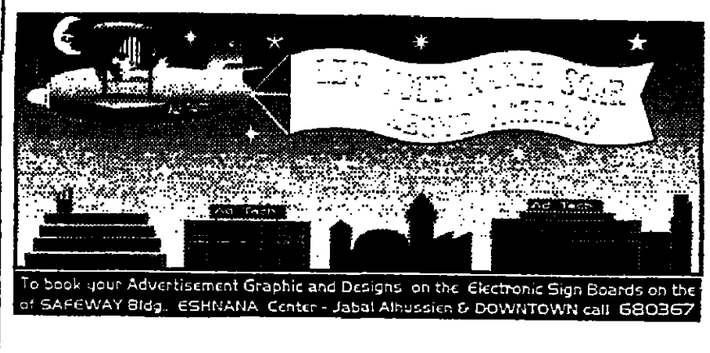
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Australian	673246/7	Lebanese	641381
Austrian	644635	Moroccan	641451
Bahraini	6641489	Netherlands	691525/694089
Brazilian	642183	New Zealand Consulate	636720
Belgian	675683	North Korean	666349
Bulgarian	818151	Norwegian Embassy	644932/4
Canadian	666124	Omani	686155
Chilean	823360	Pakistani	622787
Cyprus Honorary Cons	677559	Palestine	677517
Czech	671813/666135	People's Rep. of China	666139
Danish Consulate Gen	603703	Philippines	645161
Finnish Consulate	824654/824676	Polish	637153
French	641273/4	Qatari	682666
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Greek	671331/2	Russian	641158
Hungarian	815614	Saudi Arabian	814154/6
Icelandic Consulate	698851	Slovenia Honorary Cons	861542
Indian	637262	Sri Lanki	683905/704960
Indonesian	828911	South Korean	660745/6
Iraqi	639331	South Africa	811194
Italian	638185	Spanish	614166/9
Japanese	672486/7	Sudanese	644251/2
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		Swiss	686416/7
		Syrian	641076
		Taiwan	671530
		Tunisian	674307/8
		Turkish	641251
		U.A.E.	643347/643341
		United Kingdom	823100
		United States	820101
		Yemen	642381
		EEC Delegation	668191
		ESCWA	694351/8
		ICRC	688645
		UNDP/WFP	668171/7
		UNRWA	607398
		UNICEF	629571
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Ambulance	199
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Highway Police	787111

Hospitals

Akleh Maternity	642441/2
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
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Al-Muasher Hospital	667227/9
Amal Hospital	674155
Army, Marka	891611/15
Hussein Medical Centre	813813
Italian-Al-Muhajreen	777101/3
Jabal Amman Maternity	643362
Khaledi Maternity	644281/6
Malhas, J. Amman	636141
Palestine, Shmeisani	664171/4
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/50
Shmeisani Hospital	607431
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/37
University Hospital	845845

General

Amman Municipality	843402
Electricity Complaints	121
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Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

WHEN WE browse web pages on the World Wide Web, we never think of what type of server we are actually accessing, and what software it runs.

After all, and as Microsoft put it, "on the Internet no one knows you are running NT."

While the specifics of the servers catering to millions and ever expanding web pages might seem too diverse for many people to care about, there remains a common ground between all web servers on the Internet.

For starters, all need a perpetual connection to the Internet, usually over leased lines of varying bandwidths and costs to run the Internet's underlying network protocol TCP/IP.

On this note, the non existence of commercial web servers in Jordan is a direct result of the high costs of leased lines, which makes it even less feasible to establish a web server that would have its costly leased line clogged with free requests from outside Jordan.

Secondly, these web servers—after getting the perpetual connection—must also be assigned a specific address on the huge network of the Internet. this is achieved through an IP address assigned by RIPE, the body in charge of IP addresses allocation between all Internet.

Following the IP address, people owning web servers must contact the body in charge of Internet domain names in their country (INTER-NIC in the US and the NIC in Jordan) to get a domain name and register it for the server with that specific IP address. Of course web servers can serve multiple domain names for web pages, yet they require a specific IP address for every domain. The final aspect of the common ground between all web servers is that they all, without any exception, can host web pages!

Web server software comes in all shapes and forms and



runs on a diverse plethora of computer hardware: Microsoft's Internet Information Server IIS—which comes with Windows NT servers— can run over Intel machines, or UNIX boxes using Risc processors. The same goes for Netscape's web servers which can also run on Intel PC, UNIX machines. Apple has its own web server that runs on its proprietary Macintosh hardware. There is also NCSA's httpd web server solution.

Least known of web server solutions, at least in Jordan, is the black horse of them all; the Apache. This web server is by far the fastest of all web servers and it comes for free with the BSDI operating system, a UNIX system designed to work over regular Intel-based PCs. According to a survey conducted by Netcraft (www.netcraft.com/Survey), Apache—the least known to Jordanians—had a 33.04% share of the 252,685 web servers surveyed. NCSA' httpd came in second with 21.84% while the two big names of Netscape and Microsoft came in as third and fourth with 15.19% and 3.35% respectively.

Advertisements do deceive, don't they? The reason's behind the popularity of the Apache are many; as it is UNIX dependent it can make use of the huge libraries of excellent CGI scripts (scripts for interactive forms on web pages with the best ones programmed and available for UNIX machines). Another reason is its speedy and robust performance on the not-so-expensive (in order not to say cheap) Intel based PCs.

Finally the fact that it has the largest market share, is in itself an incentive for people to adopt it.

All of our talk here in Jordan about web servers connected to the Internet is purely academic, since we still don't have any commercial web server accessed by all Internet users.

While web servers offering their content to local subscribers in Jordan do exist, such as those offered by Global One, Primus and soon NETS, this can never substitute for what is needed to have commercial web servers allowing home pages in Jordan to be accessed by the millions on the Internet.

Leased line costs and the dismal infrastructure are to blame again. ■

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'Email Auto-responders' automate your mail

By Ala' Shahin
Special to The Star

THE INTERNET continues to prove that it will be the enabling technology of business in the 21st century. New Internet business tools are being developed all the time. On-line commerce/business will dominate and emailing will be more versatile than faxing. This article focuses on automating your email for optimal business and personal correspondence.

What Is An Auto-responder?

An auto-responder is a special type of email address. When an email message is sent to an auto-responder, a pre-written message is sent automatically to the sender. This message could be a personal greeting, sales letter, price list or even a catalogue. An auto-responder has much in common with an answering machine. You can think of it as your email answering machine.

When you call an answering machine, a pre-recorded audio message is played, then it allows you to record your own message.

In the auto-responder case, the audio message is replaced by a text message or a document that you write in advance. The incoming call is replaced by the email sent to the auto-responder.

Basic Advantages

Auto-responders have attractive features:

■ World-wide availability: Email is more popular and common than the World Wide Web.

■ 24-hours availability: Messages are answered 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week.

■ Immediate response: The average response time is from 10 seconds to a couple of minutes.

■ Cost-effective: It will reduce your emailing and faxing bill. Also, it is much cheaper than having a web site.

■ Traceability: Each message that your auto-responder receives is forwarded automatically to your emailbox enabling you to follow-up with customers.

■ Permanent: If you decide to change your Internet provider your email address will change. You'll start loosing valuable correspondence and be forced to change your paper headers and business cards. With auto-responders this won't happen. All you have to do is to ask the auto-responder service provider to change the address to which messages are forwarded.

■ Enhance your business image: Automatic replays reflects a more professional image of your business.

What Can It Do For Your Business?

If you already have a business email address you already know how consuming it is time to send over and over the same information. How many times you answered questions like: "What are your services?", "What are your latest prices/offers?" Auto-responders automate these repetitive tasks. Business applications of auto-responders include sending: Price lists, services provided, products info, testimonials, press releases and any information that you send frequently.

Can Be Personal Too

Auto-responders aren't intended to be only a business tool; many use them for their personal emailing too. Have you ever decided to go on a trip and worried about the amount of mail that will settle in your email box? You can have your personal auto-responder handle this and send a message telling senders that you are on a trip etc.

The possibilities are limitless. Auto-responders add a more personal touch to your email.

Finding A Service Provider

Once you have decided to put the advantages of this technology on your side, the logical next step will be finding a service provider. There are many companies that provide such a service over the Internet. All you have to do is to use your favorite search engine and search for terms like "auto responder" or "mail back."

Live Example

I've configured my own personal auto-responder to let you learn more about auto-responders. All you have to do is to send any email message to: shahin@virtual-adnet.com. Once your email has been received, an automatic message will be sent telling you how to get a free report on auto-responders. The report contains all the details you need to set up your own auto-responder plus lots of tips on its use. ■

Enjoy!

Email:
shahin@virtual-adnet.com

Applying 'Prometric testing' in Amman:

STS Training Center offers new services

THE TRAINING Center at Specialized Technical Services (STS), has adopted a number of new services, to add to the already existing types of training. Among these is Prometric testing.

In partnership with Sylvan Prometric, STS became the first Authorized Prometric Training Center (APTC).

The expansion of technology and knowledge in the information age has increased the need in all areas of endeavour for effective certification programs. The modern world demands that professionals at every level be able to certify the knowledge and skills which are necessary to perform their jobs adequately.

With Prometric testing, STS has expanded its customer services and added a significant value by offering a wide variety of tests for certification programs, that will enable professionals in Jordan and the surrounding countries to acquire international recognition from the certifying companies in the fields they are specialized in.

At STS APTC, the entire test process is computerized: tests and data are encrypted and transmitted via high-speed communication links.

Candidates take their tests on a computer at a convenient environment: the tests are automatically timed and scored; and the test results are re-encrypted and transmitted back to Sylvan Prometric.

The APTC at STS is authorized to deliver tests for Lotus, Novell, AST and Bay Networks. ■

STS Training Center

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

The exodus of techno- minds

WELL, IF you haven't noticed, there is a considerable number of Jordanian computer and information technology professionals that are carrying their bags and heading to the Arabian Gulf.

Some of the top marketing and technical wizards, in some of Jordan's largest computer companies, are utilizing the new opportunities available in the Gulf states. This is following several years when the Gulf was of a somewhat closed area to nationals of this country.



With the emergence of this trend, it's worth taking a look at the short- and long-term effects this could have on Jordan's computer and information technology industry, and the economy in general.

Exporting skilled labor is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, there may be a loss due to the depletion of local skills. On the other, it could be positive in the sense that funds accumulated by these expatriates could well flow back into Jordan in the coming years.

What's more, several of Jordan's nationals heading for the Gulf do so as partners in information technology projects. So they are using their knowledge to generate Jordanian wealth and value abroad.

Putting aside the macro-economic aspects, and focusing on Jordan's computer industry, it goes without saying that most technologies and new products that arrive in the Middle East appear in the Gulf first, then transpire into other Arab markets including the Levant countries like Jordan.

With our professionals at the forefront of developments, our local market has much to gain in terms of transferred expertise due to earlier exposure to the latest technologies abroad. That leaves us with the most immediate of effects, that is the sudden absence of skilled experts, whether these are technically-inclined or in the sales field.

There is no lack of new graduates in the fields of computer science, computer and electrical engineering and other related disciplines, including marketing and sales. This is of course an important part of the computing business.

So, theoretically, these graduates and the re-newed work force should fill the gap, after receiving the proper training. Naturally, training is of the essence due to the fact that most graduates have little knowledge of the 'ins and outs' of the computer business, until experiencing it. It is for this experience that our professionals receive offers abroad, in the first place. It is a credit to our computer market and to our country that our personnel are sought after. Still, we wish these people who left and others contemplating the move abroad would receive the kind of working environment and compensation needed at home. Surely, then, they wouldn't even consider leaving! But, the current economic situation, the wide difference in the level of income between Jordan and other neighboring countries and other factors prevent that ideal situation.

With pay checks at least three times as much as what they receive locally, who can blame them? Besides, there is more knowledge and experience to be gained elsewhere. That's the way it is.

A brighter future, however, lies ahead for Jordan's information technology industry, especially in terms of software development for export purposes. Now, that's one field in which we will be exporting products, rather than people. At least, for now! ■

World Soccor round up

By Alex Johnson



Maradona

The Americas

■ Argentina: Diego Maradona has confirmed that he's holding out on signing a contract to rejoin Boca Juniors because he doesn't like the club's new uniforms. The new uniforms, designed by Nike, add a wide stripe to the famous Boca look, and Maradona is insisting that the company he's affiliated with, Puma, be allowed to "correct" it. In an 80-minute meeting among club directors, Maradona and his agent, seemingly more important questions—such as Maradona's willingness to pass a physical (yes), take regular drug tests (maybe) and show up for practice every day (no)—were worked out satisfactorily, but when the discussion turned to Boca's uniform, Maradona held firm. He said in a radio interview: "If the Americans come and offer $200 million, we would change the colors of the Argentine flag. In the current world, everything is money, but there are things you have to defend against that.

■ Bolivia: First he retired from the national team, then he unretired. Now Marco Etcheverry has retired again after he came in for heavy press criticism for his performance in the national team's farcical 1-1 tie in the World Cup qualifier against Chile last week, which was interrupted for 10 minutes by an on-field brawl.

■ Brazil: National team striker Sergio is strung up in a dispute between Bayer Leverkusen of the German Bundesliga and Roma of Italy's Serie A over which club he'll play for next season because of FIFA's ruling last month that out-of-contract foreign players are covered under the Bosman ruling. Since he now can move from Leverkusen to another club without the payment of a transfer fee, the $4.5 million price that Roma negotiated to buy Sergio was invalidated, leading Bayer to exercise an option in his contract and call off the deal. But Roma insists that Sergio signed a valid contract in January and was even paid an advance on his salary. Bayer says it will risk disciplinary action and pursue its claim in the courts, which is against FIFA regulations, to ensure that it keeps Sergio.

■ Colombia: Former national team goalkeeper Rene Higuita, whose on-field antics inspired the new generation of adventurous keepers exemplified by Jorge Campos, Jose Luis Chilavert and Farid Mondragon, admitted last week that he has been a drug addict.

■ Ecuador: The national team managed to tie Peru 1-1 in a World Cup qualifier even though it finished the game with just nine men. The result leaves Ecuador tied for fourth in the South American group, even with Argentina on goal difference.

■ Jamaica: Just what is going on with the national team? Last month, team members simply stopped playing in an exhibition at Bolivia, complaining of the altitude, and then last week's exhibition against Toros Neza of the Mexican league was called off after a brawl on the field left three Neza players bleeding.

■ Mexico: Veracruz, third from last in the standings, fired Colombian coach Miguel Company. He's the first coach to bite the dust in the new Mexican season.

■ Paraguay: The national team beat Colombia 2-1 in a World Cup qualifier in Asuncion, a game marred by the ejections of Paraguayan goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert and Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla, who collided in the penalty area, sparking a bench-clearing brawl.

■ United States: Colombian papers are reporting that New York/New Jersey striker Antony de Avila could be in line for a surprise recall into the national team after last week's brawl in Colombia's World Cup qualifier against Paraguay resulted in suspensions that leave Colombia with virtually no strikers.

■ Uruguay: Enzo Francescoli, perhaps Uruguay's greatest player of the last quarter-century, announced last week that he will retire when River Plate of Argentina finishes up in the Libertadores Cup.

Europe

■ UEFA: UEFA, the European governing body, defended its lifetime ban of referee Kurt Rothlisberger for attempted bribery. Although Rothlisberger still has an appeal scheduled, UEFA spokesman Frits Ahlstrom said: "We would never had made the decision if we weren't 100 percent sure. It wouldn't have been enough to be 99.9 percent sure." Rothlisberger, one of the world's top referees, with experience in two World Cups, was banned for allegedly offering to bribe a colleague officiating a Champions League game between Grasshopper Zurich and Auxerre of France last October.

■ Belgium: Anderlecht scored a coup by signing national team striker Enzo Scifo and Danish striker Dan Petersen from Monaco of the French league.

■ Bosnia: The national team lost its first home game in the capital, Sarajevo, falling to Greece 1-0 in a World Cup qualifier last week. Greece also beat Bosnia last August in its first official game after the country declared independence from the old Yugoslavia.

■ England: Everton crossed up the experts last week and named international defender Dave Watson as interim player-manager for the rest of the season. Willie Donachie, top assistant to Joe Royle, who unexpectedly resigned the previous week, had been expected to finish out the season, but he said he's loyal to Royle and decided not to take the job.

■ France: It's been a bad week for French soccer, which was hoping the lead-in to next year's World Cup would go smoothly to help erase the bad taste left by the 1993 Olympique Marseille bribery scandal. First, the unexpected dropping of goalkeeper Bernard Lama from the national team last week was explained when it was announced that Lama faces a two-month suspension after testing positive for marijuana. Meanwhile Lille midfielder David Garcion was suspended for 18 months after he tested positive for steroid use, the longest suspension ever imposed on a French soccer player for drugs. Lille said it would "stand by the player."

■ Germany: Oliver Bierhoff, hero of the European Champion national team, said he fears that his chances of returning to Germany from Udinese in the Italian league are dead. Bierhoff, who left Borussia Moenchengladbach in 1990 and has been in Italy since 1991, first with Ascoli and then with Udinese, said German clubs appear not to want him.

■ Holland: Police arrested more than 100 fans before last Monday's game between Den Bosch and Den Haag after learning that they had arranged a fight similar to the one that killed a man last week. Before the game, 68 people were arrested for weapons possession and not carrying identification papers, and 37 others were arrested in The Hague before they could board a train to the stadium.

■ Italy: Serie A Vicenza has been ordered to play its next home game on the road because of crowd trouble in its 2-0 loss to Lazio last month, which started the Italian Cup finalists on their slide from the top of the table. The match was interrupted for eight minutes when fans invaded the field.

■ Russia: Alania Vladikavkaz striker Anatoly Kanishchev has been suspended for five games after he stifled the national team and refused to show up for the World Cup qualifier against Cyprus the previous weekend. The ban is another tough blow for Alania, the 1995 champion and 1996 runner-up, which is near the bottom of the table in the new Russian season and has missed three of four penalty kicks in its last two games. That's hard to do.

■ Spain: Barcelona, intent on winning the Spanish Cup now that the league title looks unreachable, crushed Second Division Las Palmas 3-0 in the second game of their two-game cup semifinal to go through to the final 7-0 on total goals. The difference in quality between the two clubs was shown by Barcelona's easy win even though goalkeeper Vitor Baia and World Footballer of the Year Ronaldo didn't play.

Africa

■ Cameroon: National radio got much of the country with an April Fool's joke by reporting that Roger Milla, the 44-year-old former African player of the year and hero of the 1990 World Cup squad, was returning to the national team for Sunday's World Cup qualifier against Zimbabwe, which Cameroon won, 1-0.

■ Gabon: The national team's World Cup qualifier against Morocco on Sunday was abandoned after 55 minutes when fans in Libreville invaded the field after Morocco took a 4-0 lead. The result will stand, leaving Morocco in first place and Gabon at the bottom of African Group 5.

■ Ghana: The national team's new coach is Rinus Israel, the former Dutch star who captained Feyenoord to the European Cup victory in 1970.

■ Nigeria: Police locked the main gate after the national team's 2-1 World Cup qualifying win over Guinea in Lagos on Saturday to allow local dignitaries to leave before the public.

■ Uganda: Umeme FC automatically advanced to the second round of the African Cup Winners Cup after Racing Bafoussam of Cameroon failed to show up for the first game of their two-game matchup in Kampala. Because of a scheduling screw-up, Racing did actually show up-24 hours late.

Asia

■ Asian Confederation: Khodadad Azizi of Piruzi in the Iranian league was surprisingly named Asian Footballer of the Year last week, beating out fellow Iranian Ali Daei, the world's top international goal scorer of 1996, with 23 goals in international matches. Azizi was the revelation of the Asian Cup, in which Iran finished third, its best showing in 20 years. He's the first Iranian to win the Asian award. Daei was second, followed by South Korean striker Ko Jeong-woon and Saudi Arabian teammates Mohamed Al-Daeyea and Yousef Al-Thuniyan. The Saudis were named Asian Team of the Year after winning the Asian Cup for a record third time.

■ Hong Kong: Former World Player of the Year George Weah and European Championship star Alan Shearer are among the players named to a FIFA all-star team to play an Asian all-star team in July to mark the handover of Hong Kong to China. Other big names are expected to be announced for the July 3 game, two days after Britain transfers sovereignty of the colony, a bit of timing that has FIFA fending off accusations that it's getting too involved in politics. Last year's Asian Player of the Year, Masami Ihara of Japan, has signed on for the Asian all-stars, which could provide him with a showcase to attract interest from big European clubs.

■ Saudi Arabia: The three national team players who tested positive for drugs at the Asian Cup in December, which the Saudis won, were cleared because of a mix-up in the testing procedures. Asian confederation General Secretary Peter Velappan said FIFA objected to the handling of the tests and therefore "it is not possible to take any disciplinary action or ban the players," who have not been named.

■ Vietnam: National team coach Karl Heinz Weigang resigned last week, ending a year and a half of service marked by a series of disputes with the federation. Disagreements over his contract were the final straw for Weigang, who blamed "very deep divergences in the professional relationship between (the federation) and me." Under Weigang, a 62-year-old German, Vietnam was runner-up at the 1995 Southeast Asia Games. ■

LA Time-Washington Post News Service



Lama



Bierhoff



هكذا من الأصل